Credits: Collage by **Steve Jones, Plantain Studio;** Includes Graphics from Student Projects by **Manthan Rasal, Jared Elizares & Gauri Mirashi,** (MArch 2022); **Lizzy Wilson & Elif Aydinli,** (MArc

CCA ARCHITECTURE / URBAN WORKS AGENCY

RADICAL

OAKLAND STORIES

WEST

JAN 2017
The Village, aka The Promised Land, is built at Grove Shafter Park

JUN 2018
Oakland looks to move
100 people of Two
Coliseum
Dignity

SEP 2022
Caltrans crews remove unhoused residents from Wood Steet

Urban Cultures: Reading and Representing the Urban

Spring, 2025

Instructor:
Julia Grinkrug

Students:
Canyon Allan
Sofia Garcia
Rocio Urbano Guadalix
Jerome Kim
Makoto Komine
Loel Quevedo
Anhelina Rozum
Amira Seale

Community Partners:
David Peters, West Oakland Cultural Action Network
Adam Garrett-Clark, Neighborship

Architecture Division
California College of the Arts

CCA
ARCHITECTURE

Urban Cultures: Reading and Representing the Urban

Bachelor of Architecture Seminar - Design Media 4, Spring 2025
Architecture Division, California College of the Arts, San Francisco
Instructor: Julia Grinkrug

Beyond the scale of a building or interior lies the broader context of the city. As cities around the globe face urgent contemporary challenges, understanding urbanity becomes essential for architectural practice in the 21st century. ***Urban Cultures*** seminar presents a curated selection of approaches that examine the multifaceted nature of urbanity, building a balanced foundation of theoretical insights and practical skills in urban research.

In Spring 2025 the seminar partnered with ***The Prescott Experiment*** - a community-led project funded by an Equitable Community Revitalization Grant (ECRG) from the Department of Toxic Substances Controls (DTSC).

CCA ARCHITECTURE

Project Booklets

HOME IS NOT A HOUSE

a look into efficiency based housing in West Oakland

WHO GETS TO LIVE HERE?

In West Oakland, historic segregation was enforced through redlining, racially restrictive covenants, and discriminatory lending practices. These measures confined residents to certain neighborhoods and denied them access to homeownership and investment opportunities. As a result, poverty became concentrated, preventing many from building generational wealth through property, despite the formation of vibrant and self-sufficient communities. Over time, disinvestment and urban renewal further displaced residents, paving the way for today's gentrification and rising housing costs.

"Oakland's overlapping crises of housing affordability and homelessness have been intensifying for years now and there don't seem to be any solutions within sight. The city's average home price brushed up against $1 million this year, putting ownership out of reach for most residents."

oaklandside.org 2022

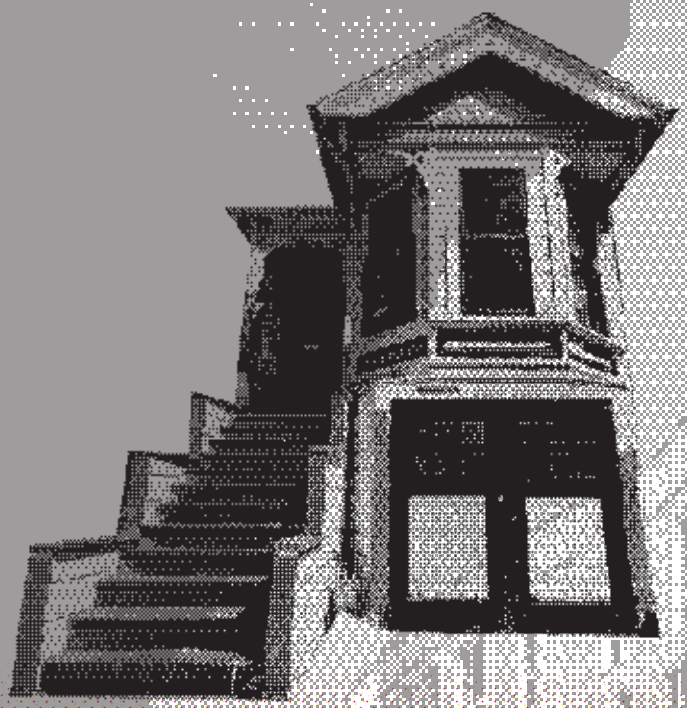
Backgroun Image: MOMS4HOUSING

WHO GETS TO CALL WEST OAKLAND HOME?

WHO BENIFITS FROM REDEVELOPMENT?

WHO GETS TO OWN PROPERTY?

WHO BENIFITS FROM DEVELOPEMENT?



The single family home in West Oakland, often a Victorian or craftsman, has long offered stability, outdoor space, and multigenerational living rooted in community identity. New dense housing developments, whether market rate or affordable, aim to address housing shortages by adding more units near transit and jobs. While efficient, they often lack the cultural depth and social ties of older homes. Single family zoning limits density, but unchecked development can drive displacement. As West Oakland changes, the question remains: who is this new housing really for?

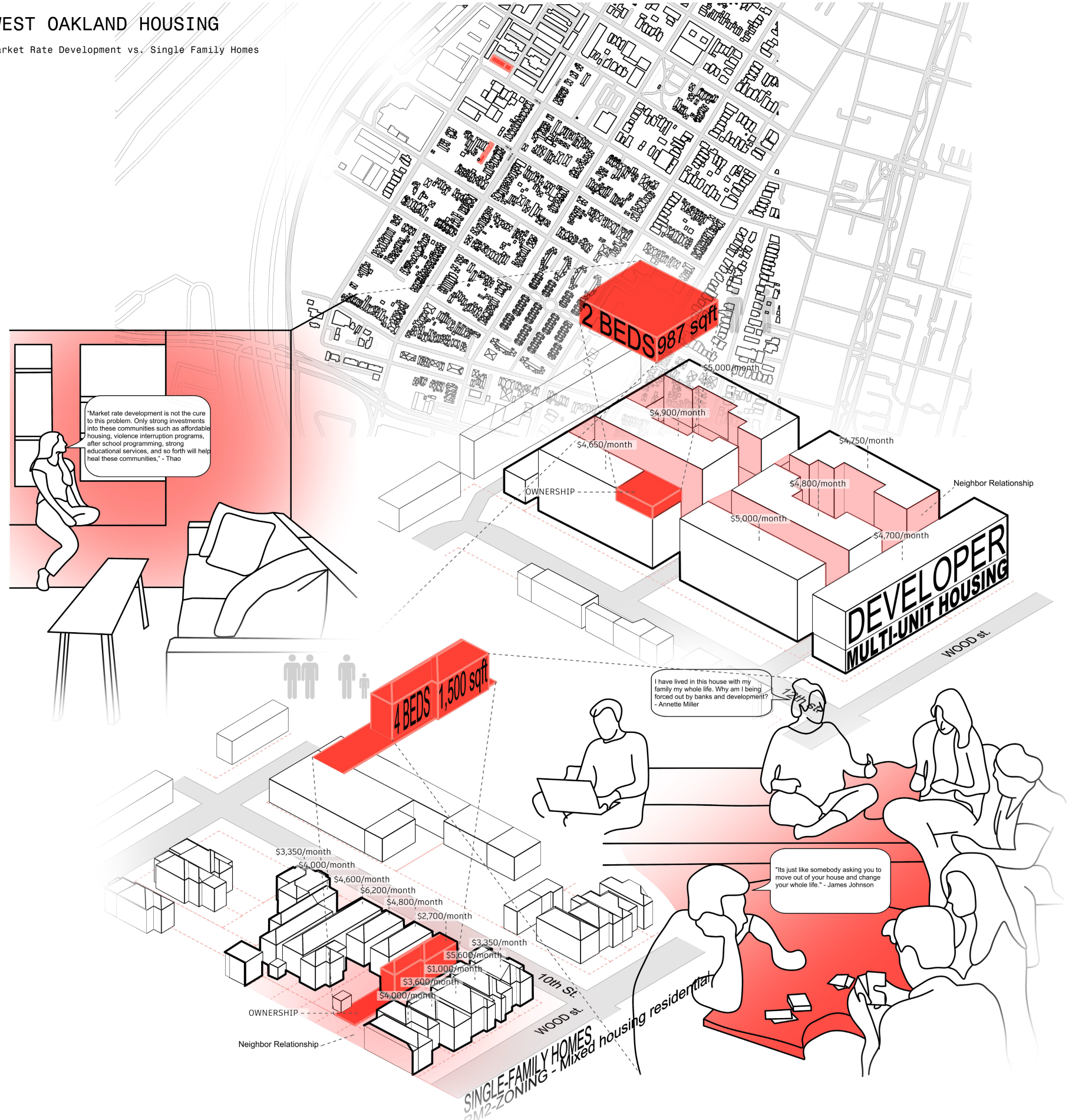
"My building has fifty units and I barely know my neighbors, but it's the only place near BART I could afford."

"Growing up in our old house, everyone on the block knew each other—we shared tools, food, and stories."

Background Image: Black Panther Affordable Housing along 7th Street

WEST OAKLAND HOUSING

Market Rate Development vs. Single Family Homes



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Transit-oriented developments are designed to bring housing closer to transit hubs like BART, promising easier access to jobs, services, and the broader city. But in practice, these developments often cater to higher-income residents, pricing out those who transit was originally meant to serve. As land near stations becomes more valuable, longtime communities are pushed further out, losing both homes and connectivity. If transit is supposed to equalize access, why does it so often end up reinforcing inequality? Where does development go from here—and who gets to decide?

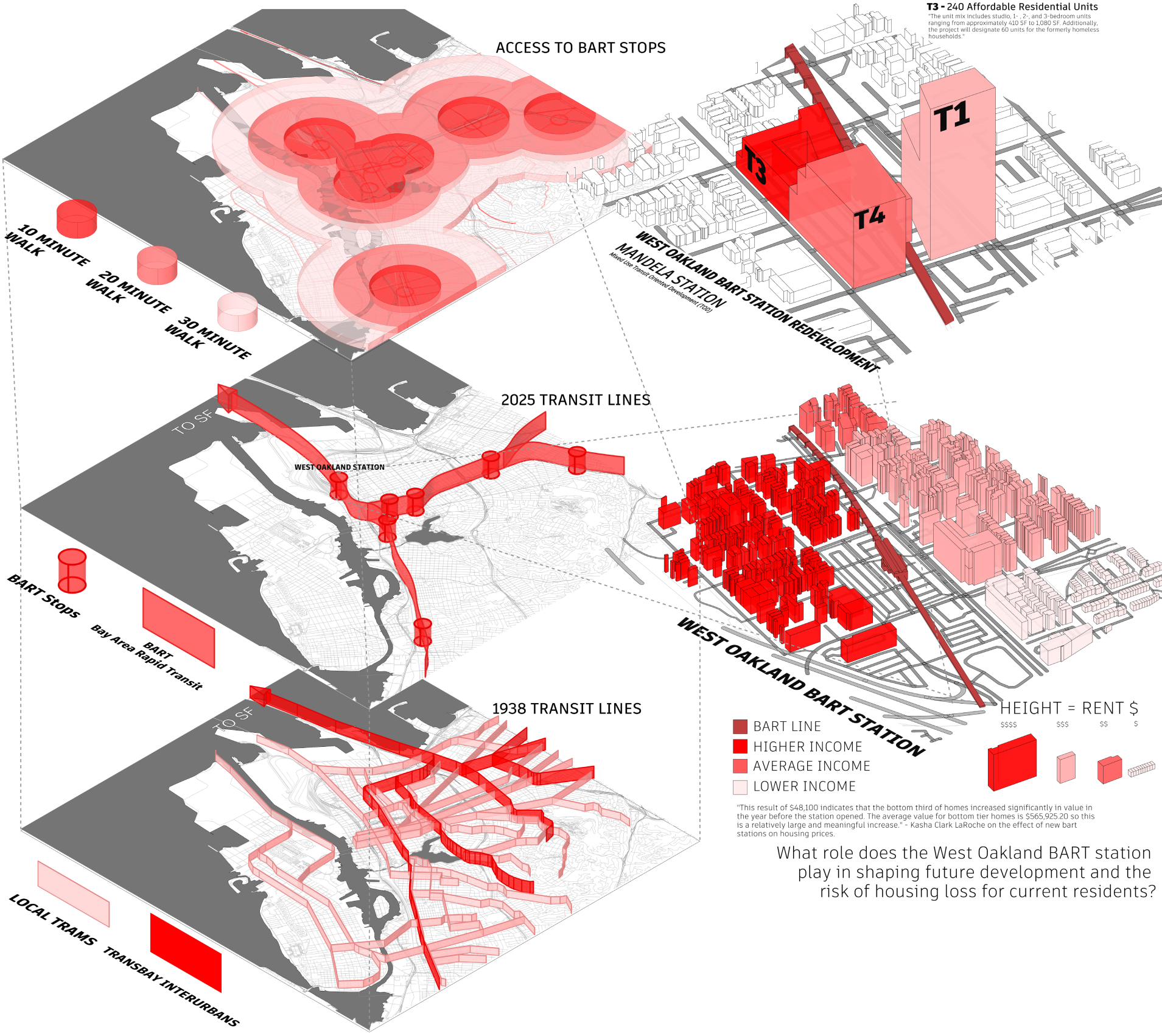
"Proximity to BART stations can be a significant factor in determining home and rental prices in Oakland, with properties close to these stations often commanding a premium due to the convenience and accessibility they offer."

doorstead.com 2024

Background Image: Proposed Plan for Mandela Station along 7th Street

MAPPING THE COST OF CONNECTION

How does being near transit affect who can afford to live in Oakland – and who gets pushed out?



"This result of $48,100 indicates that the bottom third of homes increased significantly in value in the year before the station opened. The average value for bottom tier homes is $565,925.20 so this is a relatively large and meaningful increase." - Kasha Clark LaRoche on the effect of new bart stations on housing prices.

What role does the West Oakland BART station play in shaping future development and the risk of housing loss for current residents?

HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

CANYON ALLAN - DESIGN MEDIA 4 - 2025

Where Do Things Grow?

Gardening Through Rupture in West Oakland

Infrastructure, Land Use, and Urban Agriculture in West Oakland

West Oakland has long been shaped by transportation systems, industrial growth, and patterns of migration. While community gardens, informal markets, and urban farms have provided access to fresh food and local resilience, larger forces—such as redlining, freeway construction, and industrial zoning—have continuously reshaped access to land. These changes fractured neighborhoods, displaced families, and left behind soil contamination and disinvestment.

This project traces the intersection of infrastructure and food systems across time. What once included backyards, orchards, and shared plots has become a patchwork of vacant lots, food deserts, and fenced-off parcels. Still, urban gardens remain. Beyond growing food, they hold space for cultural memory, ecological repair, and intergenerational knowledge.

Through mapping, historical research, and spatial observation, this work documents how West Oakland's land has been lost and reclaimed—highlighting the role of gardens not as romantic gestures, but as practical, grounded responses to structural neglect.

What do we inherit when our soil is paved over?

Forces of Change

Tracing the Shifts in West Oakland's Landscape

1852 — West Oakland is established

1869 — The Transcontinental Railroad is completed

1870s-1880 — Agricultural trade expands through new rail systems

1890s — African American communities grow in West Oakland.

1910s-1930 — The Great Migration brings thousands of African Americans to West Oakland

1920s-1930 — The Great Migration reshapes the neighborhood

1940s — Wartime industry fuels economic growth

1957 — The Cypress Freeway cuts through the community

1966 — The Black Panther Party is born

1989 — The Loma Prieta Earthquake brings down the freeway

1990-2020 — Gentrification transforms the landscape

Urban Gardens as Formal and Informal Practice

Urban gardens in West Oakland operate on two planes—one visible to policy, the other rooted in lived experience. This project mapped how gardens exist both within and beyond zoning logic, often defying formal classifications to meet everyday needs. In a neighborhood fractured by industrial expansion and housing displacement, gardens reclaim backyards, sidewalks, and vacant lots as systems of care.

At one site, zoning technically permits small-scale gardening—yet what actually takes root reveals more. Residents share tools, raise goats, compost food scraps, and host cultural events. These are not just food-growing spaces but informal infrastructures built by and for the community. They form networks of survival where public systems fall short.

Does the city support its gardeners, or simply tolerate them?

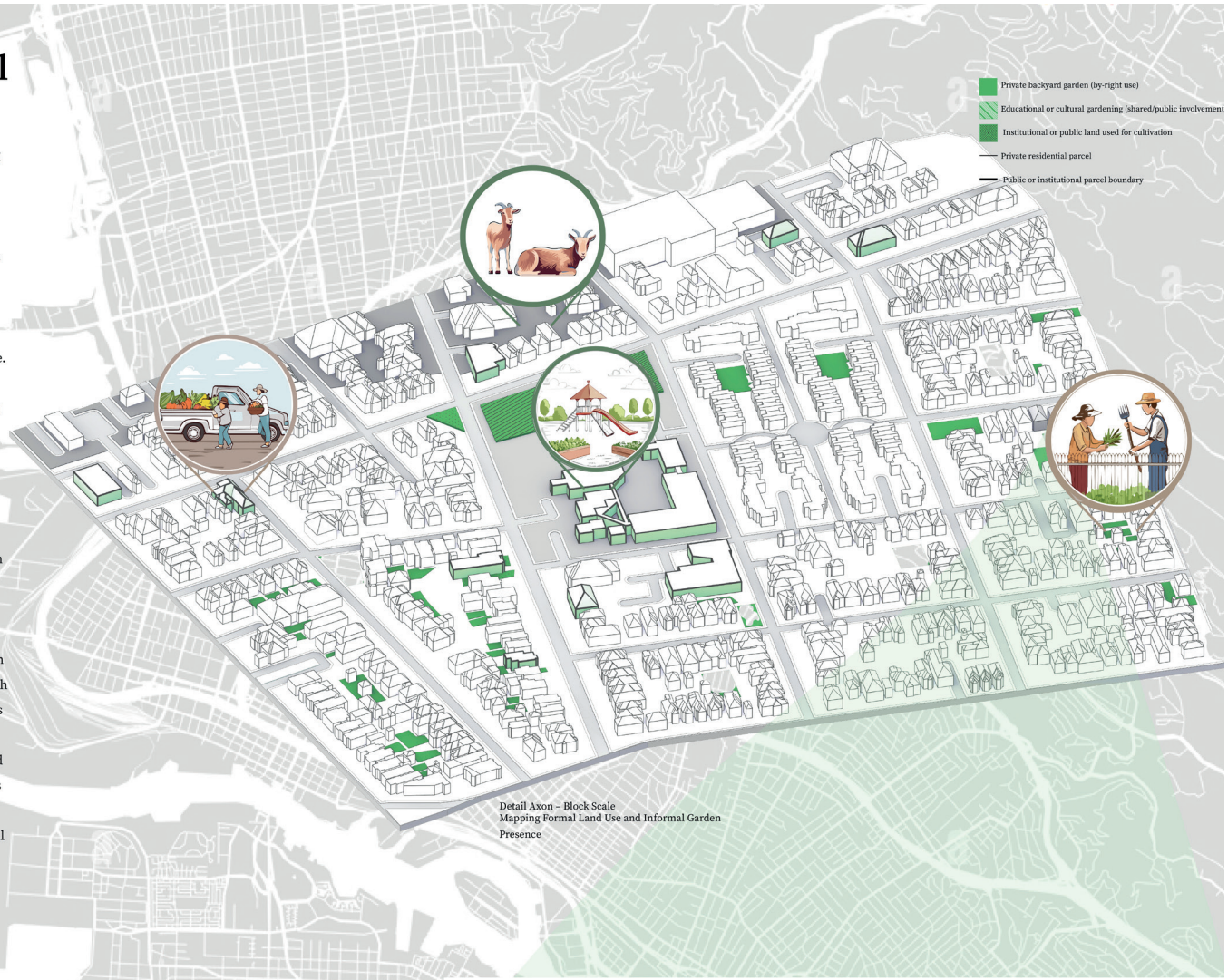
Where does formal zoning end and mutual aid begin?

Urban Gardens as Formal and Informal Protocols

The Spatial Life of Urban Gardens in West Oakland

This drawing maps the presence and function of urban gardens in West Oakland, revealing how they operate as both formal infrastructure and informal community lifelines. By documenting public and private growing spaces, this research highlights how urban gardening intersects with food access, land use, and collective care. These gardens represent more than green space—they are nodes of resilience that challenge displacement and provide space for cultural gathering, teaching, and mutual aid.

Formally, most of the observed gardens fall under Oakland's "limited agriculture" zoning classification, which permits residential-scale food growing by right in zones like RM (residential multi-family) and RD (residential duplex). Within the Prescott neighborhood, these zones dominate, allowing for vegetable beds, composting, and even small-scale animal keeping—such as chickens and goats—under specific setback and health requirements. However, while zoning technically allows for these practices, their actual emergence depends on factors like parcel ownership, community initiative, and historical land use patterns. The drawing highlights this tension by mapping the overlays of zoning envelopes, property lines, and access types, revealing where formal allowances support informal action—and where



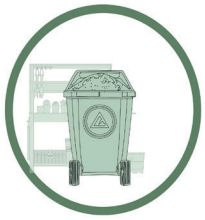
Detail Axon – Block Scale
Mapping Formal Land Use and Informal Garden Presence

Community-Led Gardening Practices in West Oakland

1. Harvesting

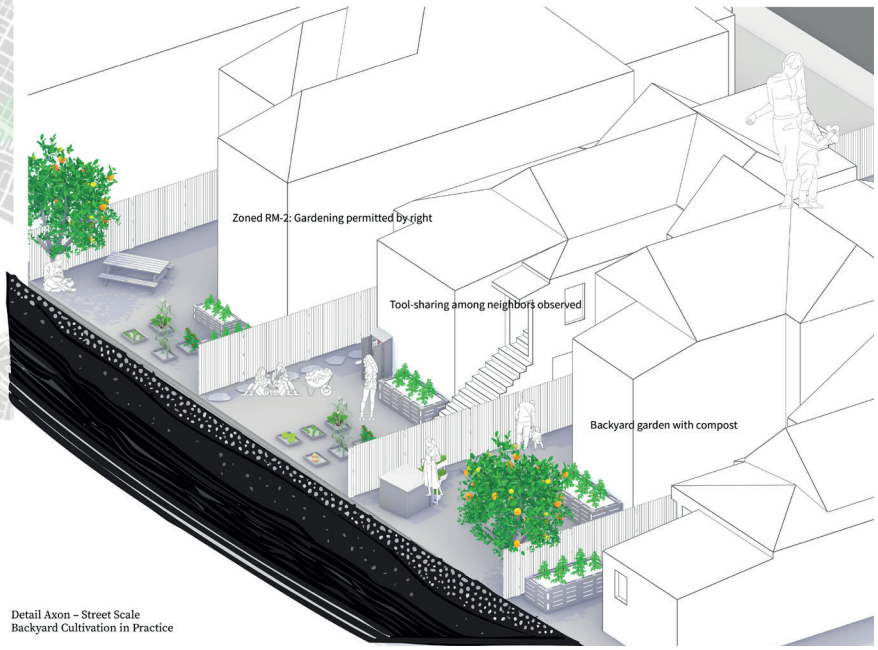
2. Mutual aid / tool sharing

3. Cultural gathering



4. Composting

5. Informal teaching



Detail Axon – Street Scale
Backyard Cultivation in Practice

Water Systems and the Informal Infrastructures of Survival

The water that reaches West Oakland originates over 90 miles away in the Sierra Nevada and is delivered via the Mokelumne Aqueduct, managed by EBMUD. Despite this regional network, water infrastructure within the neighborhood remains unreliable. Aging sewer systems, sealed creeks, and rising groundwater compromise water access and management at the local level. Project 3 maps this fragmented journey—tracing water from its source to its points of rupture and loss in West Oakland's residential fabric.

In response to these failures, residents implement informal and decentralized strategies. Rain barrels, drip irrigation, greywater reuse, and raised beds built above contaminated or flood-prone soil reflect a localized form of environmental adaptation. These methods are not merely provisional—they constitute a form of infrastructural agency, shaped by necessity and supported through shared knowledge.

How do communities reclaim land when the soil itself is unsafe?

What forms of stewardship emerge in spaces marked by toxicity?

Where Does the Water Go?

Tracing Oakland's water networks from mountain to garden.

The water that reaches West Oakland doesn't begin nearby. It travels nearly 100 miles from the Sierra Nevada, flows through the Mokelumne River, crosses the Delta, and is carried westward by a vast aqueduct system managed by EBMUD. But by the time it arrives, it's no longer a clean, direct journey — it's fragmented, leaking, rising from the ground, and often unreachable to those who need it most.

This project maps the journey of water across three interconnected scales: from the regional systems that bring water in, to the broken and buried networks that lose it along the way, to the neighborhood-level questions of how water is accessed, reused, or wasted.

In West Oakland, the problem isn't just scarcity — it's contamination, aging infrastructure, rising groundwater, and a long history of environmental neglect. What happens to the water that doesn't make it to the tap? How do residents irrigate their gardens, manage polluted soil, or access rain and greywater alternatives?

Scale 1 – Regional Watershed Flow
From the Mokelumne River to the East Bay

Water for West Oakland begins over 90 miles away in the Sierra Nevada foothills. It travels through the Mokelumne Aqueduct and across the Delta before entering the East Bay. The EBMUD system supplies this urban area, yet the journey of water doesn't end at the tap.

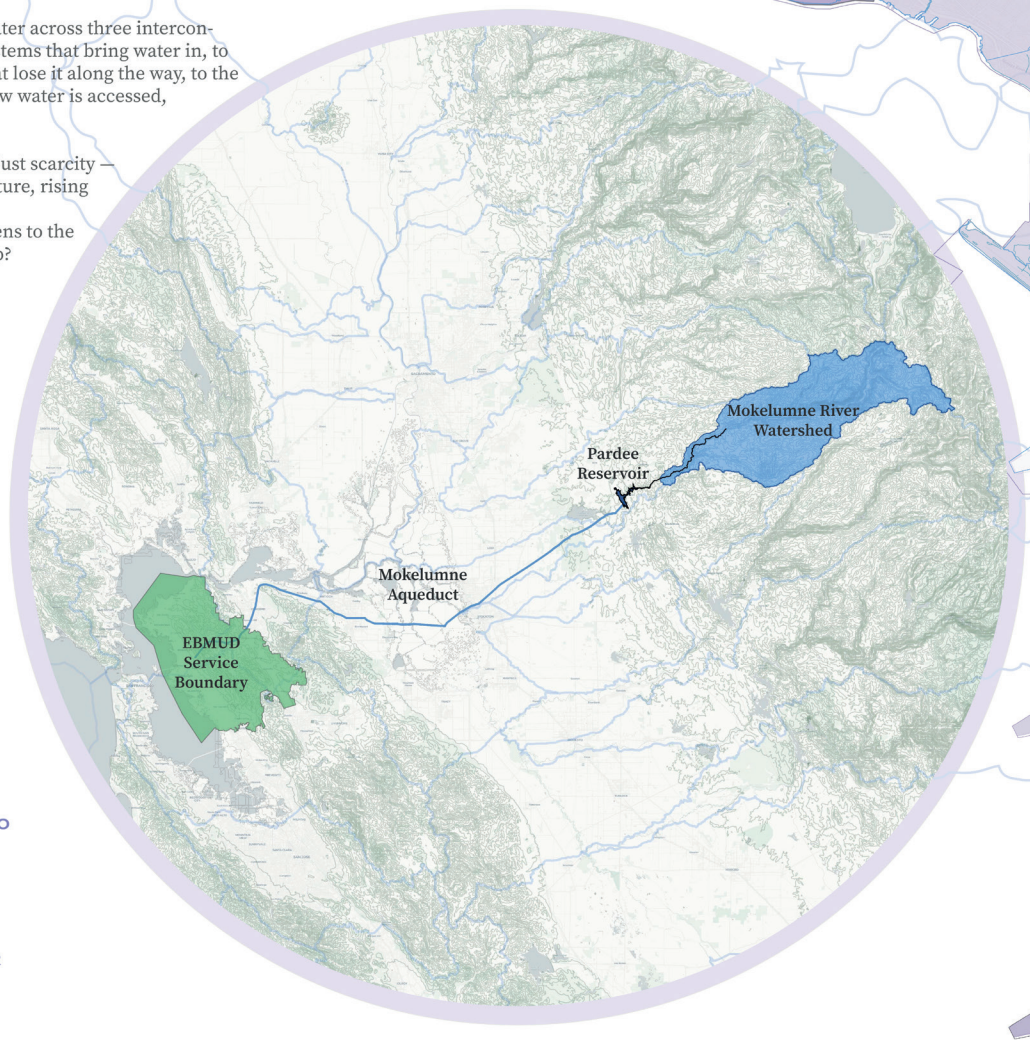
WEST OAKLAND HAS OVER 200 BROWNFIELD SITES AND IS PART OF THE EPA'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SCREENING TOOL DUE TO HIGH CUMULATIVE EXPOSURE RISKS.

RESIDENTS FACE ELEVATED LEVELS OF DIESEL PARTICULATE MATTER—UP TO 90 TIMES HIGHER THAN STATE AVERAGES,

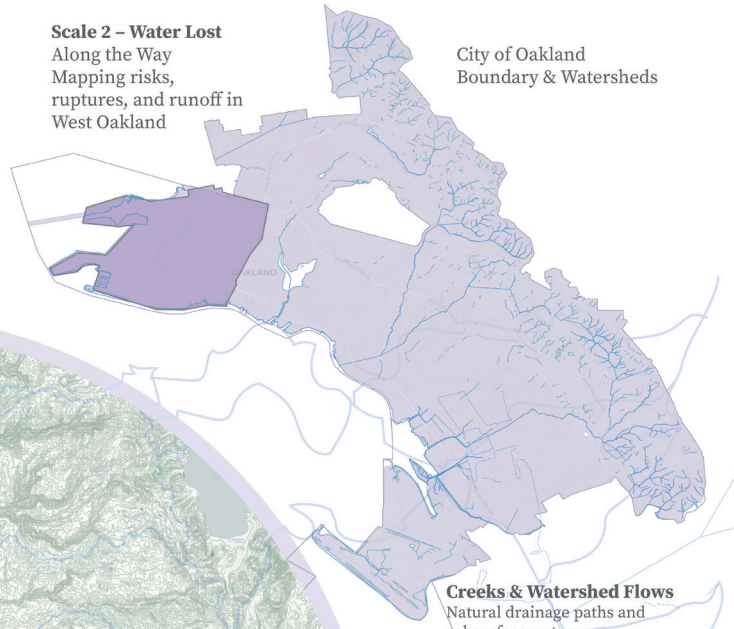
43% OF WEST OAKLAND RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN 6' OF RISING GROUNDWATER

8 MILES OF CREEKS SEALED UNDER CONCRETE

90+ MILES OF WATER TRAVEL FROM SIERRA TO EAST BAY



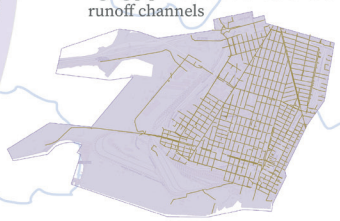
Scale 2 – Water Lost
Along the Way
Mapping risks, ruptures, and runoff in West Oakland



City of Oakland Boundary & Watersheds

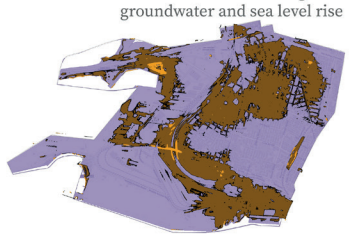
Creeks & Watershed Flows
Natural drainage paths and subsurface waterways

Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure
Aging pipe networks and artificial runoff channels



Toxic Sites & Industrial Pollutants
Brownfields and chemical exposure zones

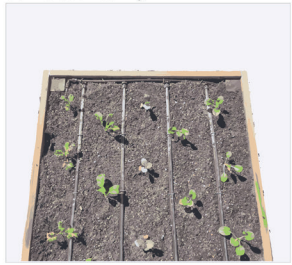
Groundwater Within 6'
Areas at risk due to rising groundwater and sea level rise



Container Gardens
Reuses buckets and barrels to grow food in non-arable land.

Rain Barrel System
Collects rooftop runoff for reuse in gardens.

Drip Irrigation
Reduces water use through efficient slow-release watering.



Raised Garden Beds
Prevents contact with contaminated soil by using clean fill.

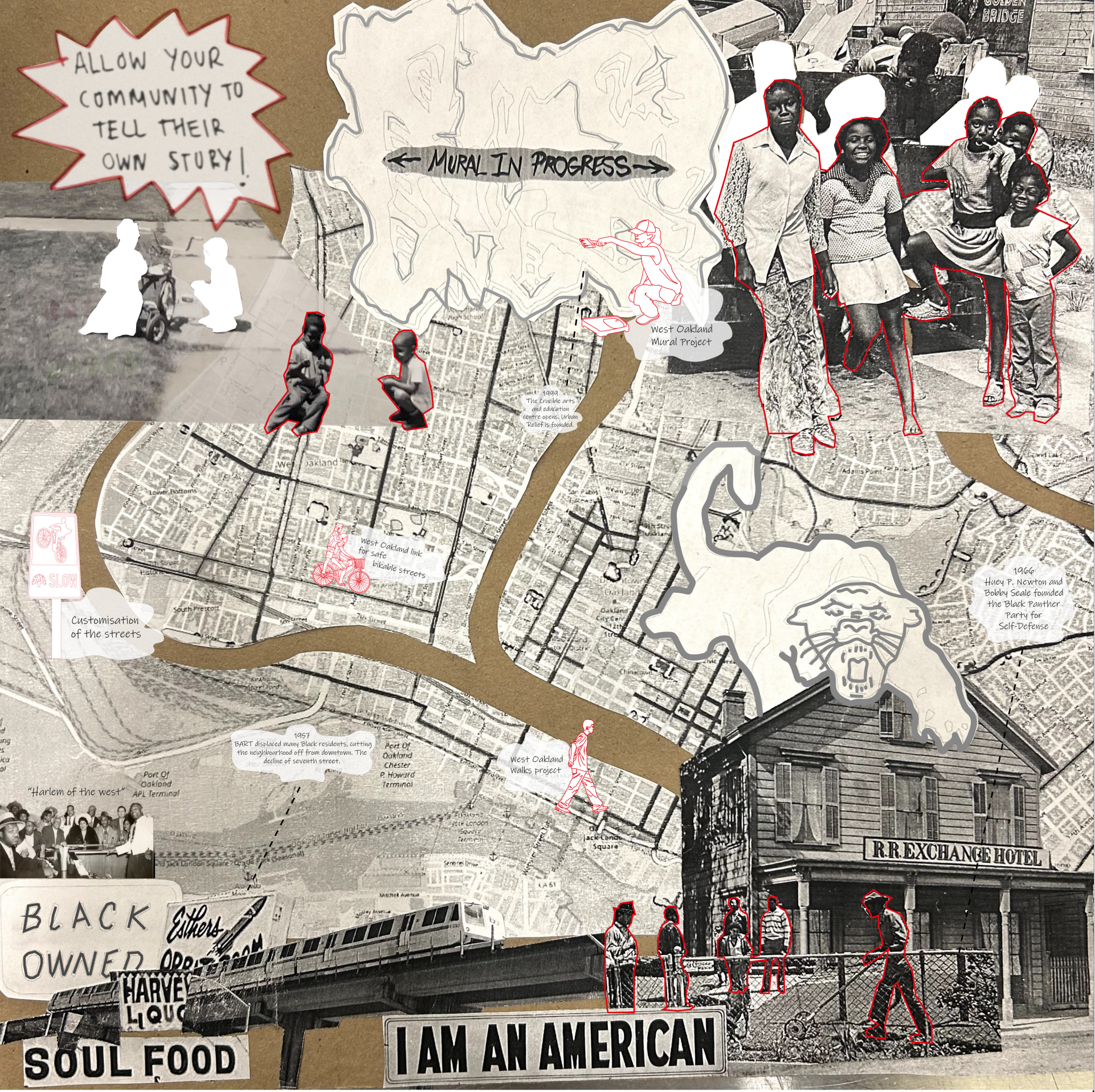
Sofía Garcia

I'm a B.Arch student at California College of the Arts who cares deeply about ecology, art, and how environmental systems shape daily life. My work explores how everyday practices, like gardening, can help people care for each other, resist environmental harm, and reconnect with land in meaningful ways.

Spring 2025
Design Media Seminar: Urban Cultures
Bachelor of Architecture
California College of the Arts, San Francisco
Instructor: Julia Grinkrug

ALLOW YOUR COMMUNITY TO TELL THEIR OWN STORY

People have been telling West Oakland's story a lot over the past decade, but it's almost never from the perspective of those who actually grew up here. Just like with redevelopment, the decisions—and the stories—keep getting made without really listening to what the community has been saying all along.


ALLOW YOUR COMMUNITY TO TELL THEIR OWN STORY!
← MURAL IN PROGRESS →
West Oakland Mural Project
1999
The Crucible arts and education centre opens. Urban Relief is founded.
West Oakland link for safe bikable streets
SLOW
Customisation of the streets
1966
Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense
1957
BART displaced many Black residents, cutting the neighbourhood off from downtown. The decline of seventh street.
West Oakland Walks project
"Harlem of the west"
R.R. EXCHANGE HOTEL
BLACK OWNED
SOUL FOOD
I AM AN AMERICAN

WHERE AND WHAT HAPPENS IN THE GAP BETWEEN COMUNITY NEEDS AND INSTITUTIONAL PROTOCOLS

Institutions have established designated spaces intended for community gathering and mutual resource exchange.

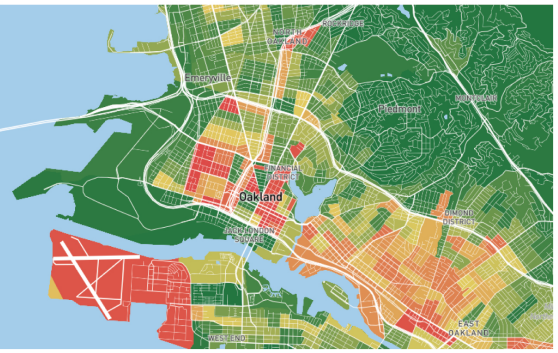
However, when these spaces prove inaccessible, insufficient, or unsafe, communities respond by mobilizing collectively, blurring the boundaries between public and private spaces and adapting formal protocols to meet their own needs.

Analyzing the dynamics of public and private protocols, this study examines the contrast between zoning regulations and actual land use, exploring how leisure activities emerge in the gaps between them.

Mapping specific activities in distinct locations, ranging from unconventional housing to the repurposing of underutilized structures for gatherings, and the adaptation of unconventional spaces like sidewalks as social hubs.

How can we create a space for local exchange that centers community benefit, safety, and accessibility through the simultaneous collaboration of grassroots initiatives and institutional frameworks?

Highway Map



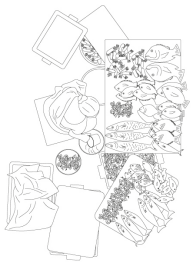
High income | Average income | Low income

Levels of income Map

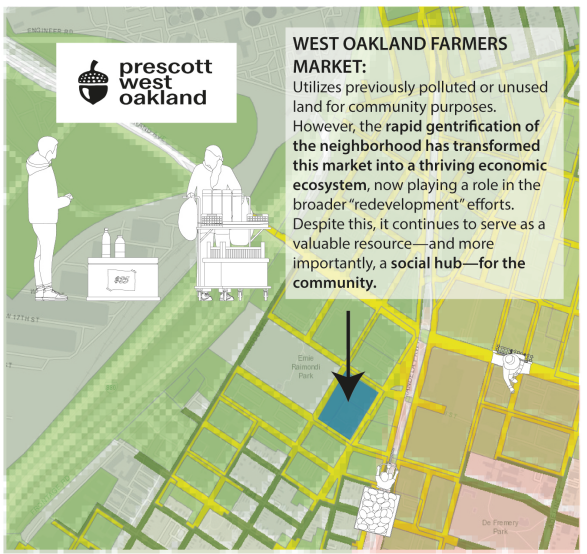
Permittable vending area in private property

Permittable vending area for trucks, trailers and stationary vendors

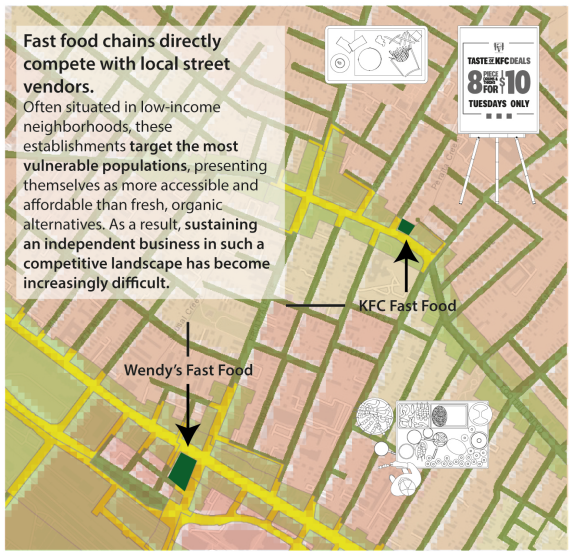
Permittable vending area for sidewalk and roaming vendors



Why should communities advocate for street vendors over institutional fast food chains in low-income neighborhoods?

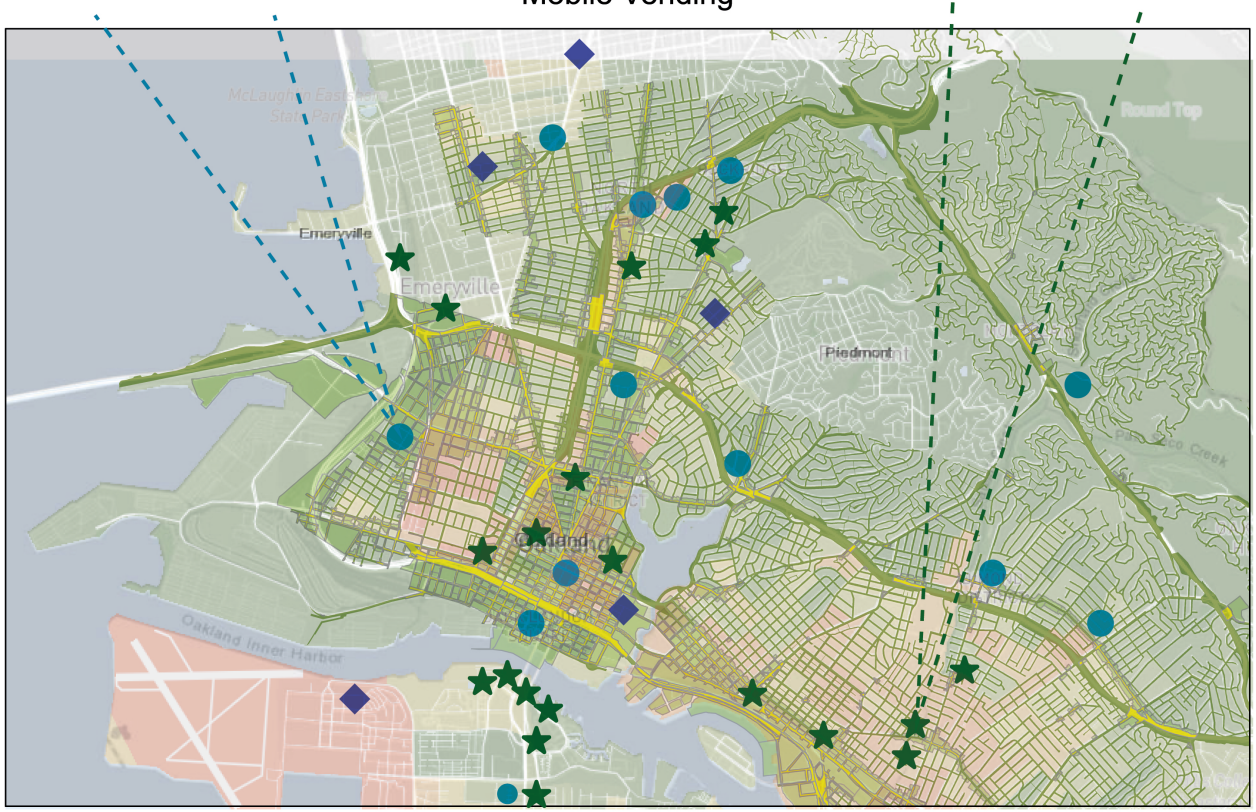


WEST OAKLAND FARMERS MARKET



KFC & FAST FOOD AREA

Mobile Vending



April 14, 2025

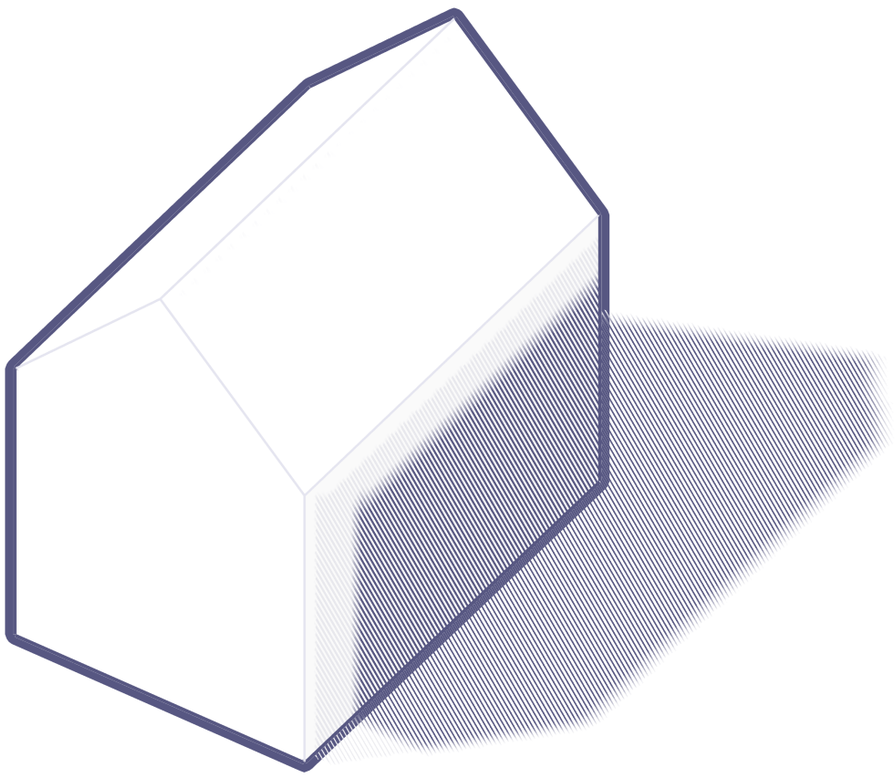
- Permitted Vending Area for Trucks, Trailers, and Stationary Vendors
- Permitted Vending Area- For All Sidewalk Roaming Vendors
- All Vendors- Permitted Vending Area on Private Property
- Flea Markets
- Farmers Markets
- Fast Food Chains

1:72,224

0 0.5 1 2 mi

0 0.75 1.5 3 km

Bureau of Land Management, Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., USGS, EPA, Esri, HERE



MOVING

DISPARITY OVER GENERATIONS HAUNTS THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

Q: WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

Prescott, also known as the Lower Bottoms, used to be a home to a variety of communities. Being situated near the waterfront, it used to house the workers employed by shipyards and factories of the east bay. Also, it was once the haven of Blues music in the Bay Area. However, as the demand for shipbuilding withered and through constant discrimination towards this neighborhood of working class ethnic communities, the population of the neighborhood declined. Eventually, as the construction of the overpass over the 7th street, a home to west coast blues, came to a completion, it marked the end of an era of once vibrant neighborhood.

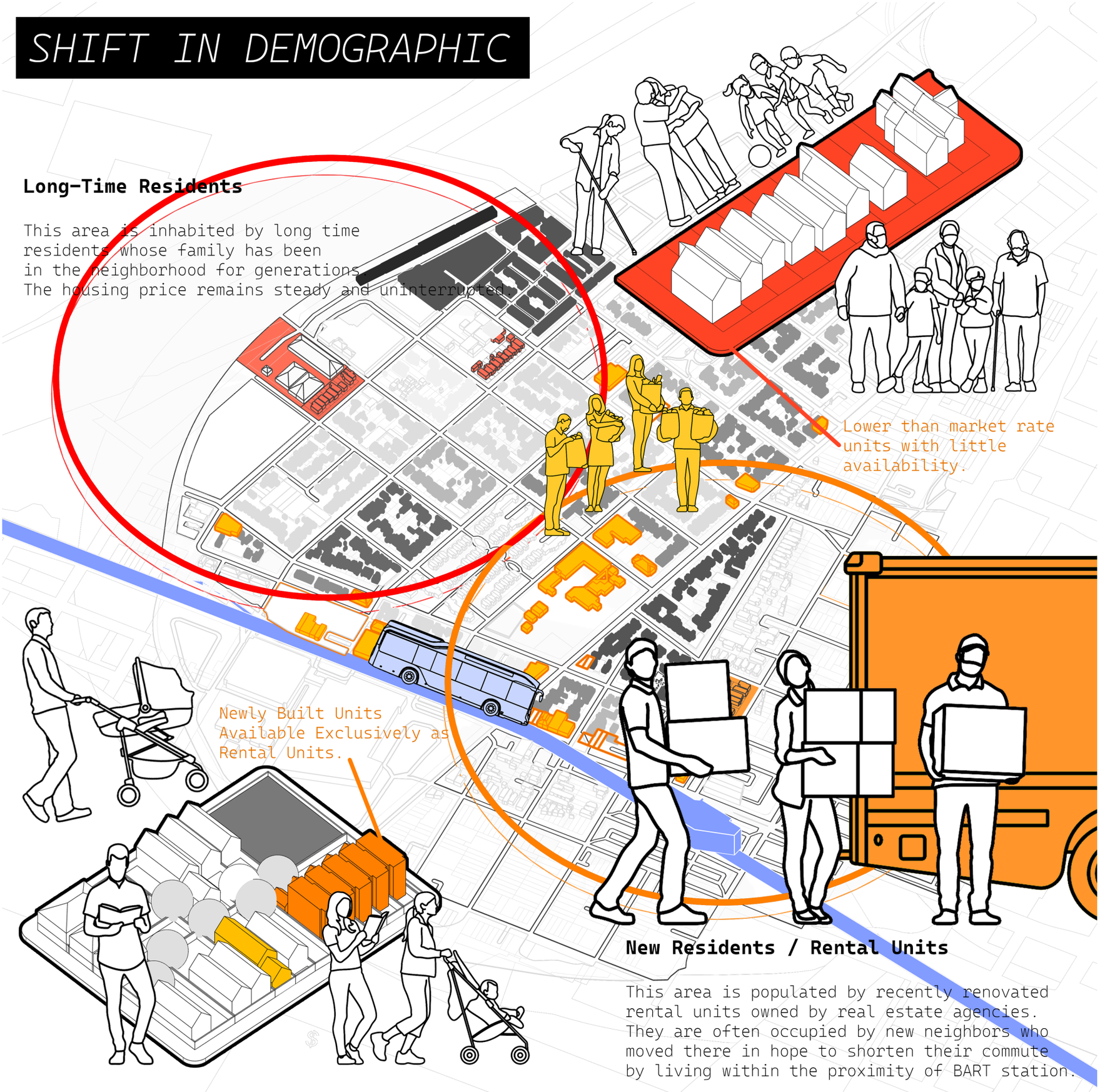
ELSIE'S
DINNERS
FINAL NOTICE OF EVICTION
Court Case No 602-14
Address 100 West Street Pines
NORTH COUNTY SHERIFF'S
SHERIFF SERVICE
Pipe City
Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
Oakland Long Wharf (Terminus)
La Estrella
"SLIM" JENKINS' BLUE ROOM
Slim Jenkin's Night Club
Moore Dry Dock
Photos from the heydays of Harlem of the west
Construction of BART and Interstate Freeway
MARCH FOR JOBS
JOB SUNDAY
PARADE AND RALLY
1869
The end Terminal for Central Pacific Line of the first transcontinental railroad was completed.
1930
West Oakland became predominantly African American neighborhood (280,000 residents) with many thriving businesses suh as jazz and blues clubs.
During Great Depression, many of the locals loses their homes and form a temporary housing using surplus sewer pipes, called "Pipe City".
Pre-1939
Working class families from diverse backgrounds populated the area and worked at shipyards and railyards.
Many also came from Mexico, fleeing from Mexican revolution. Many others from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and other Central America were also present.
1939-45
Due to labor shortage, many workers were brought in from outside the neighborhood during WW2, mostly from southern states.
Majority of them settled in the lower half of West Oakland, which happens to mark the beginning of segregation.
1940s
West Oakland became the central stage of the West Coast for Blues, attracting many visitors to its diverse music venues.
1950s
West Oakland sees decline in wartime jobs.
Construction of freeway, BART, and urban renewal displaces most of Latinx community and many of African-American Community.
High overty rate increases due to changes in the neighborhood. Multiple community organizations were formed in response.
1960s
Situation worsens with the completion of BART above-ground track, which disturbs the neighborhood relentlessly day and night.
Black Panthers is formed in effort to resist the urban renewal projects harming the neighborhood. West Oakland becomes the central stage for their movement.

THE ABSENTEES:
A RISING TIDE OF CORPORATE OWNERSHIP.

Q: WHO LIVES HERE?

Cities constantly change. Some stay put in the same neighborhood through generations while the majority of the neighborhood acts almost like a revolving door, where people come and go at a short interval. Prescott, being a neighborhood near the station closest to the city on the east bay, became a rather popular place for those seeking to move closer to their workplaces. Naturally, it causes the investors to purchase the houses for rental in hope to make a profit. This displaces the existing neighbors and lowers the individual ownership of the houses, inevitably driving up the average cost of living.

SHIFT IN DEMOGRAPHIC



Long-Time Residents

This area is inhabited by long time residents whose family has been in the neighborhood for generations. The housing price remains steady and uninterrupted.

Lower than market rate units with little availability.

Newly Built Units Available Exclusively as Rental Units.

New Residents / Rental Units

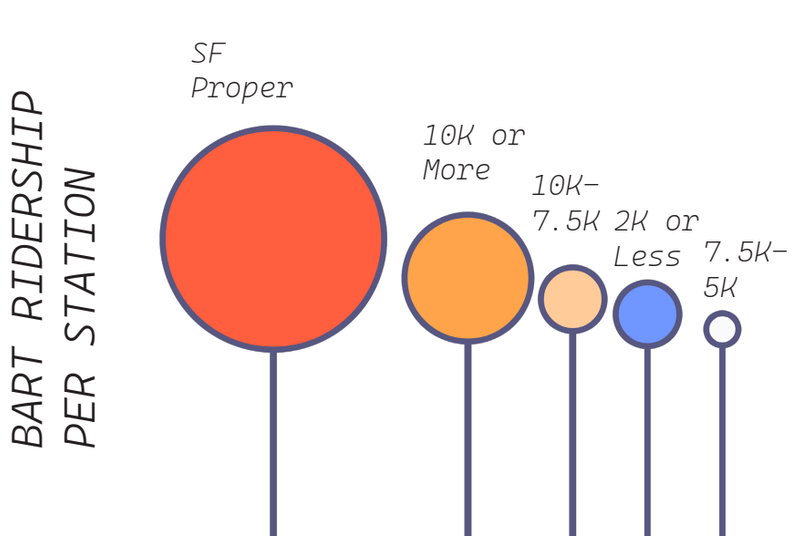
This area is populated by recently renovated rental units owned by real estate agencies. They are often occupied by new neighbors who moved there in hope to shorten their commute by living within the proximity of BART station.

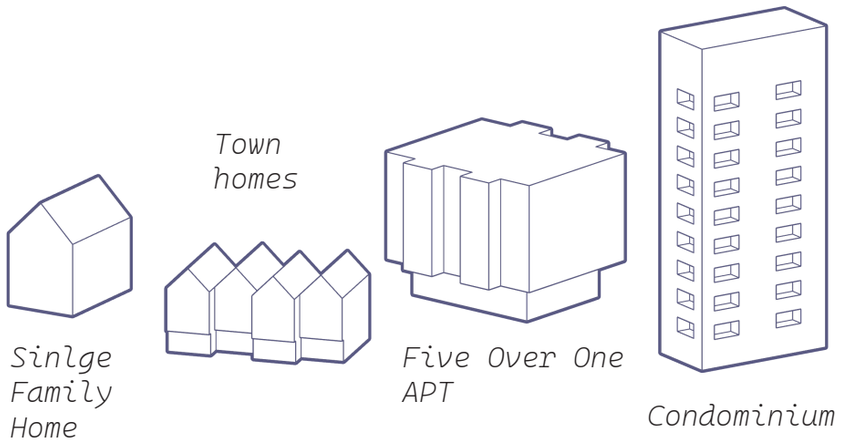
THE VEINS OF EXPANSION:

SUPPLYING THE POPULATION WITH HOUSING

Q: WHERE DOES EVERYONE ELSE LIVE?

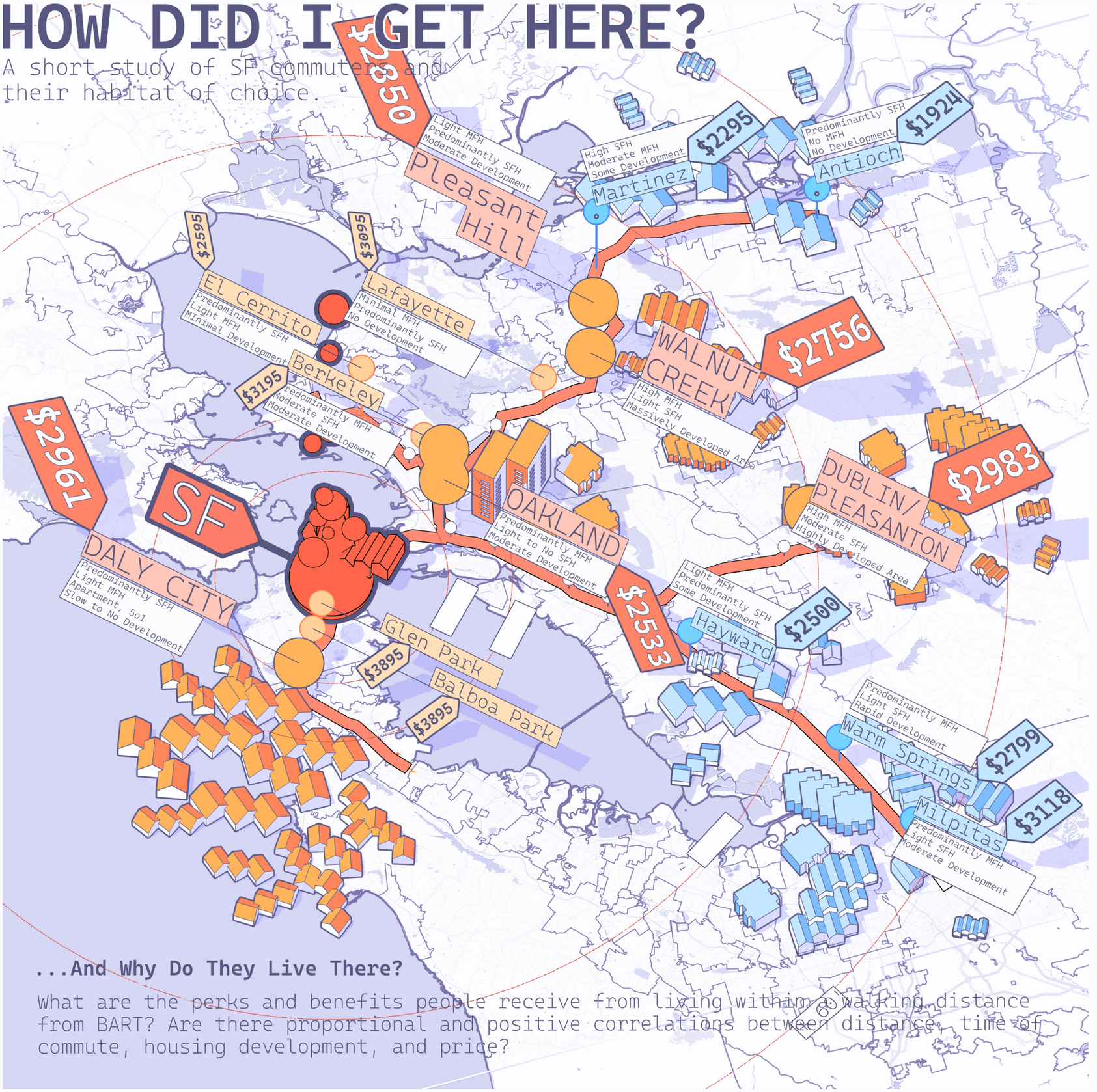
In Bay Area, a sizeable portion of the population commutes to downtown San Francisco often via BART. As BART connects 50 different cities and neighborhoods, it provides the commuters with a range of options as to where they can live. The following panel shows the popular places of origin and types of housing commonly found near the stations. In some areas, it contradicts common expectations such as distance positively correlating to housing price, types of housing found near densely populated area commonly being multi family units, or less popular stations of origin being sparsely populated.





HOW DID I GET HERE?

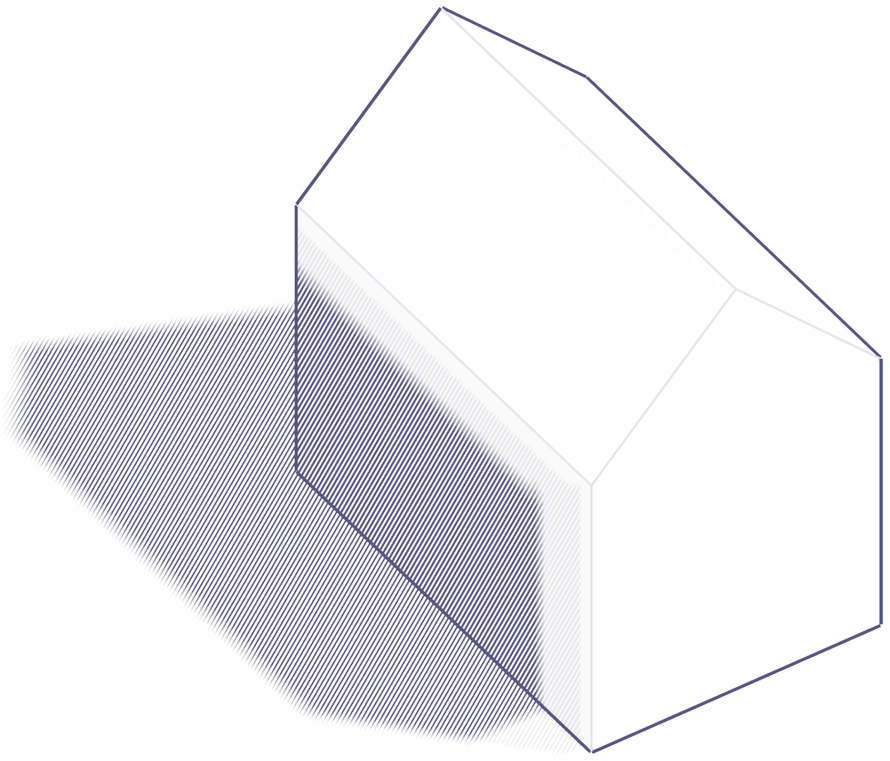
A short study of SF commuters and their habitat of choice.

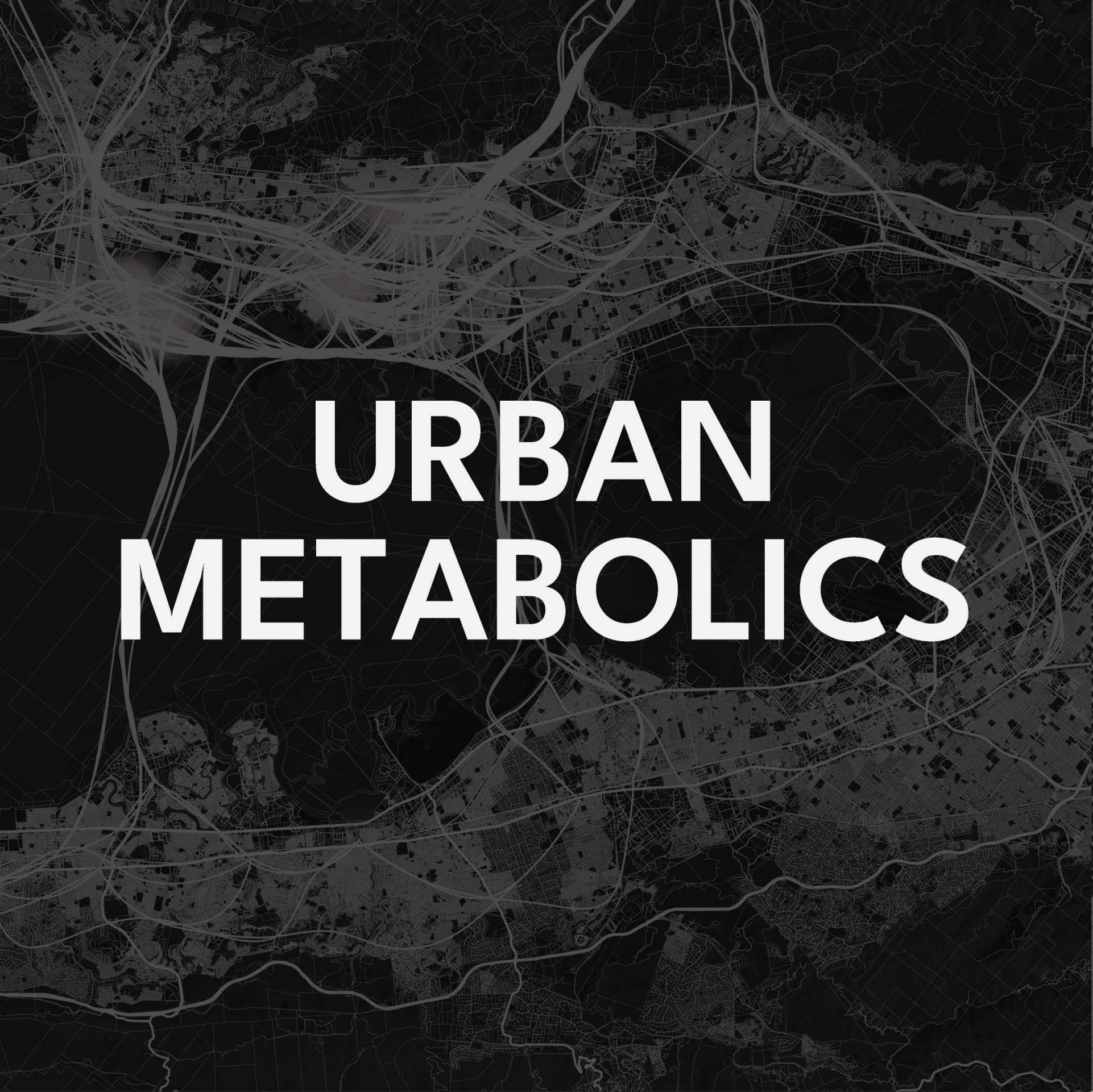


...And Why Do They Live There?

What are the perks and benefits people receive from living within a walking distance from BART? Are there proportional and positive correlations between distance, time of commute, housing development, and price?

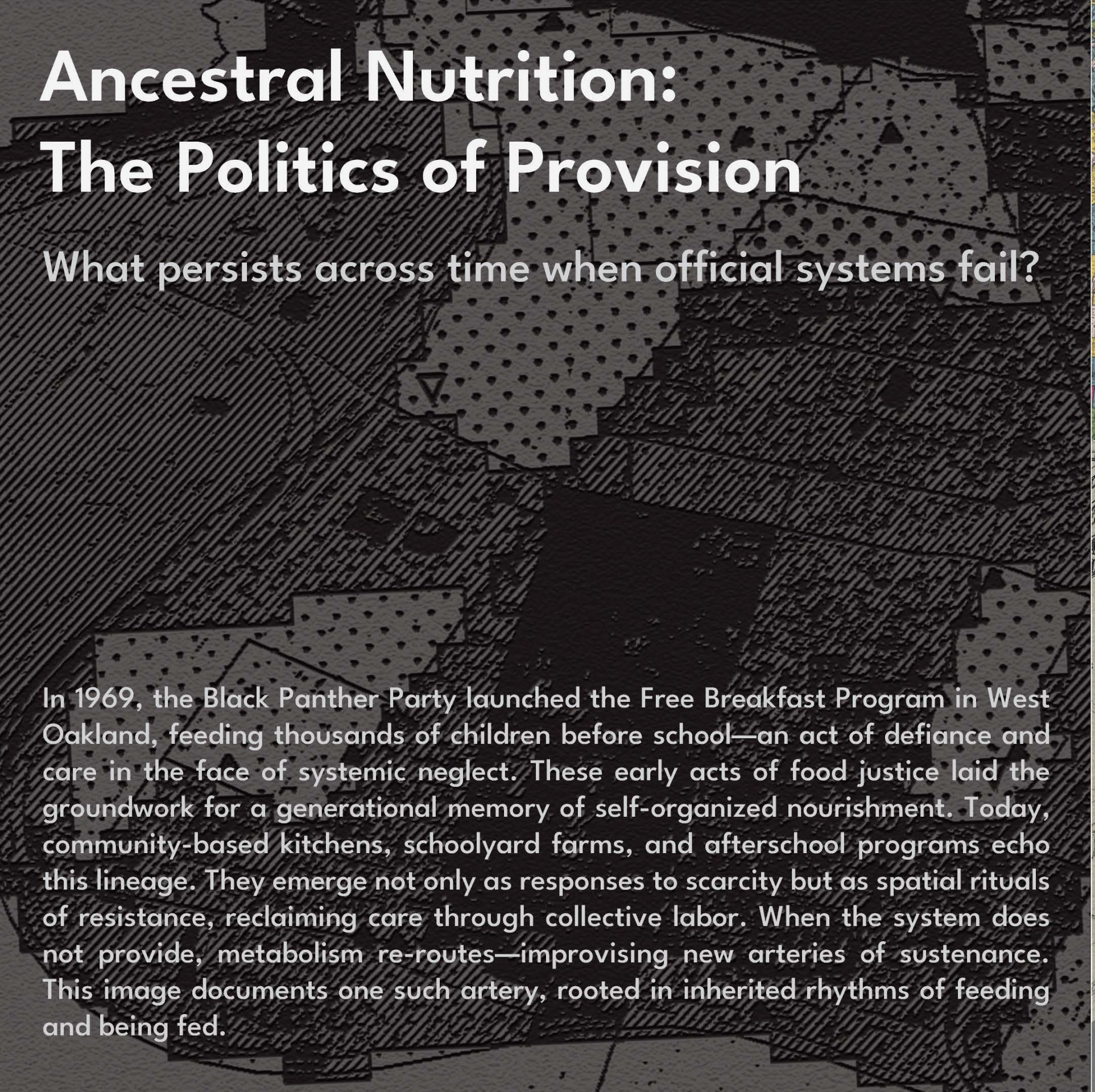
JEROME KIM
DESIGN MEDIA 4
SPRING 2025




URBAN
METABOLICS

Ancestral Nutrition: The Politics of Provision

What persists across time when official systems fail?



In 1969, the Black Panther Party launched the Free Breakfast Program in West Oakland, feeding thousands of children before school—an act of defiance and care in the face of systemic neglect. These early acts of food justice laid the groundwork for a generational memory of self-organized nourishment. Today, community-based kitchens, schoolyard farms, and afterschool programs echo this lineage. They emerge not only as responses to scarcity but as spatial rituals of resistance, reclaiming care through collective labor. When the system does not provide, metabolism re-routes—improvising new arteries of sustenance. This image documents one such artery, rooted in inherited rhythms of feeding and being fed.

PEOPLES
FREE FOOD
PROGRAM
FREE BREAKFAST
FOR CHILDREN
GARDEN
DONATIONS
4000 BCE
Ohlone Presence
1776
Juan Bautista de Anza expedition arrives
1820/08/03
Luis Maria Peralta is granted 44,800 acres
1848/01/24
Gold is discovered at Sutter's Mill near Placerville
1850/09/05
California becomes a state
1852/05/04
Oakland becomes a town (formerly "Contra Costa")
1854/04/04
Horace Carpentier becomes first mayor
1863-1869
First transcontinental railroad constructed
1868/10/21
Great Earthquake of 1868
1869/11/08
The first transcontinental train arrives
1872
Oakland and Brooklyn schools are desegregated
1872
Oakland annexes Brooklyn
1906
1906 Earthquake
1909/11/16
Oakland annexes Elmhurst, Fruitvale, Melrose, Pitchburg and Claremont
1914-1918
WWI
1918-1920
1918 Flu Pandemic
1933/12/04
Prohibition ends, Slim Jenkins Club opens opens next day
1934
Redlining begins with the National Housing Act of 1934
1939-1945
WWII
1940-1945
Population Boom
1946/11
1946 General Strike, initially started by K&H department store workers
1957-1958
Construction of Interstate 880
1966/08
Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton form the Black Panther Party for Self Defense
1969
The Black Panther Free Breakfast Program begins
1972/09/11
BART service begins
1974
BART opens to West Oakland station
1989/10/17
Loma Prieta Earthquake
1991 Firestorm
1989/10/19
2001
People's Grocery is founded
2003
The West Oakland Food Collaborative is established
2006
The City of Oakland bans new liquor stores
2010
West Oakland is classified as a food desert by the USDA
2011
Mandela Grocery Cooperative opens
2013
The Farm at San Antonio Park opens
2020
The pandemic exacerbates food insecurity in West Oakland
2014
The City of Oakland amends Zoning laws to support urban farming

Tensions in the Tissue: Informal Pulse, Formal Spine

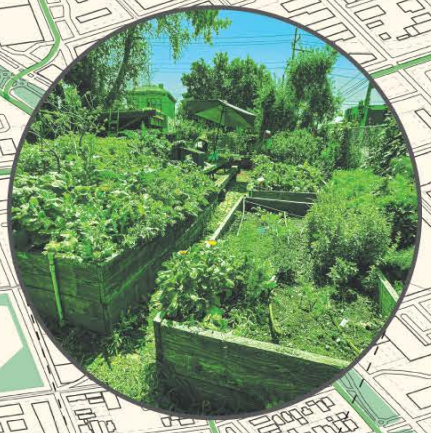
The synergy between grassroots energy and institutional infrastructure is not a compromise, but a necessity.

West Oakland's social programs today operate between friction and flow—between street-level spontaneity and structured systems. A youth garden run by volunteers might flourish beside a city-funded food pantry. One is agile and intimate, the other stable and scalable. Together, they form an adaptive circulatory system. Behind each plate served is a network: donation chains, storage hubs, public grant timelines, volunteer shifts. The most effective spaces of community care often arise where formal logistics scaffold informal energy. This image marks the moment of that recognition—the realization that metabolic efficiency depends not only on passion, but pipelines.

Community Building Catalyst

St. Mary's Center

West Oakland Farm Park



High Density
Affordable Housing

Mandela Grocery Cooperative

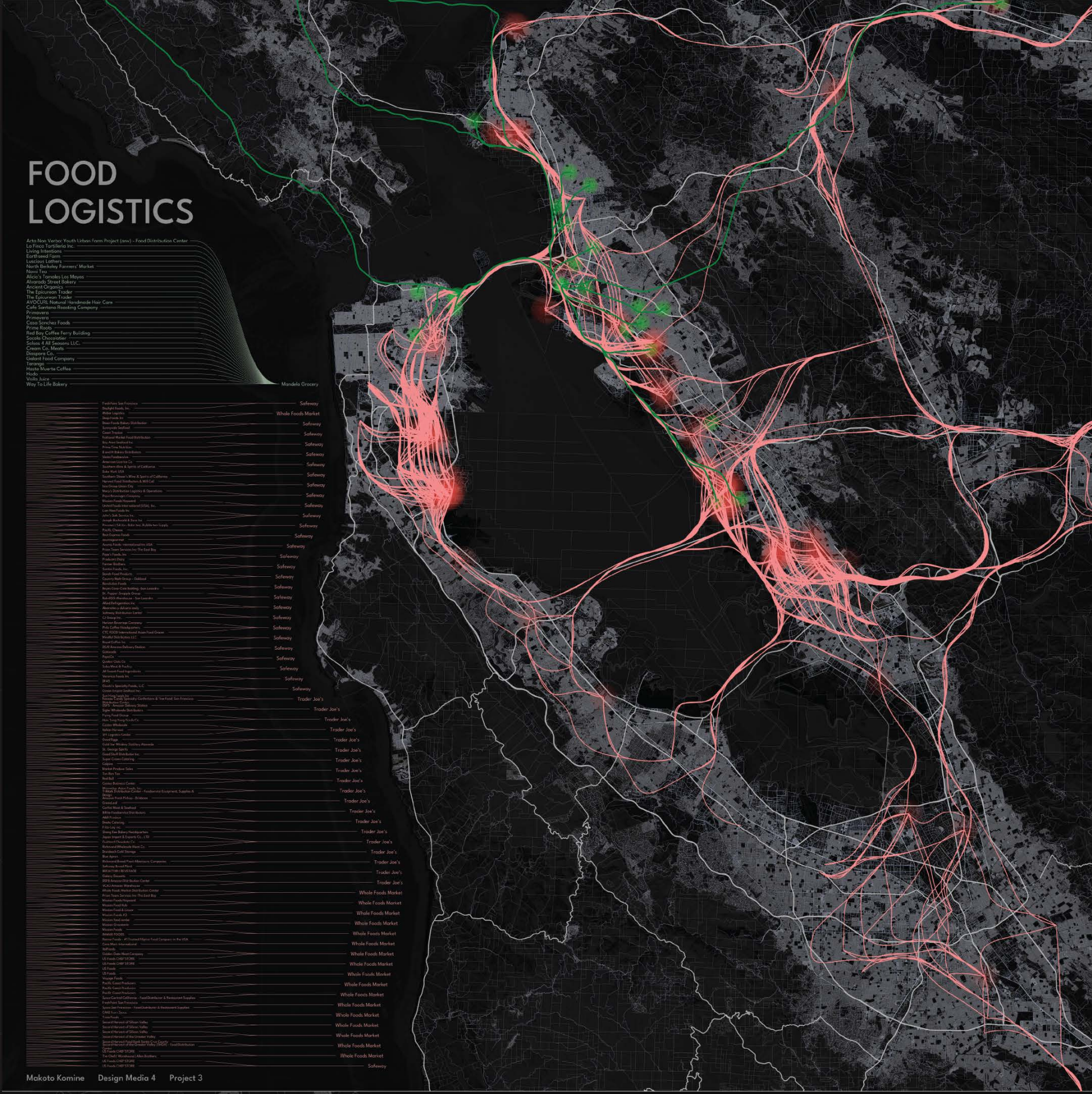
Bottoms Up Community Garden

N

Scaling the System: The Breath of the Bay

How does a city eat?

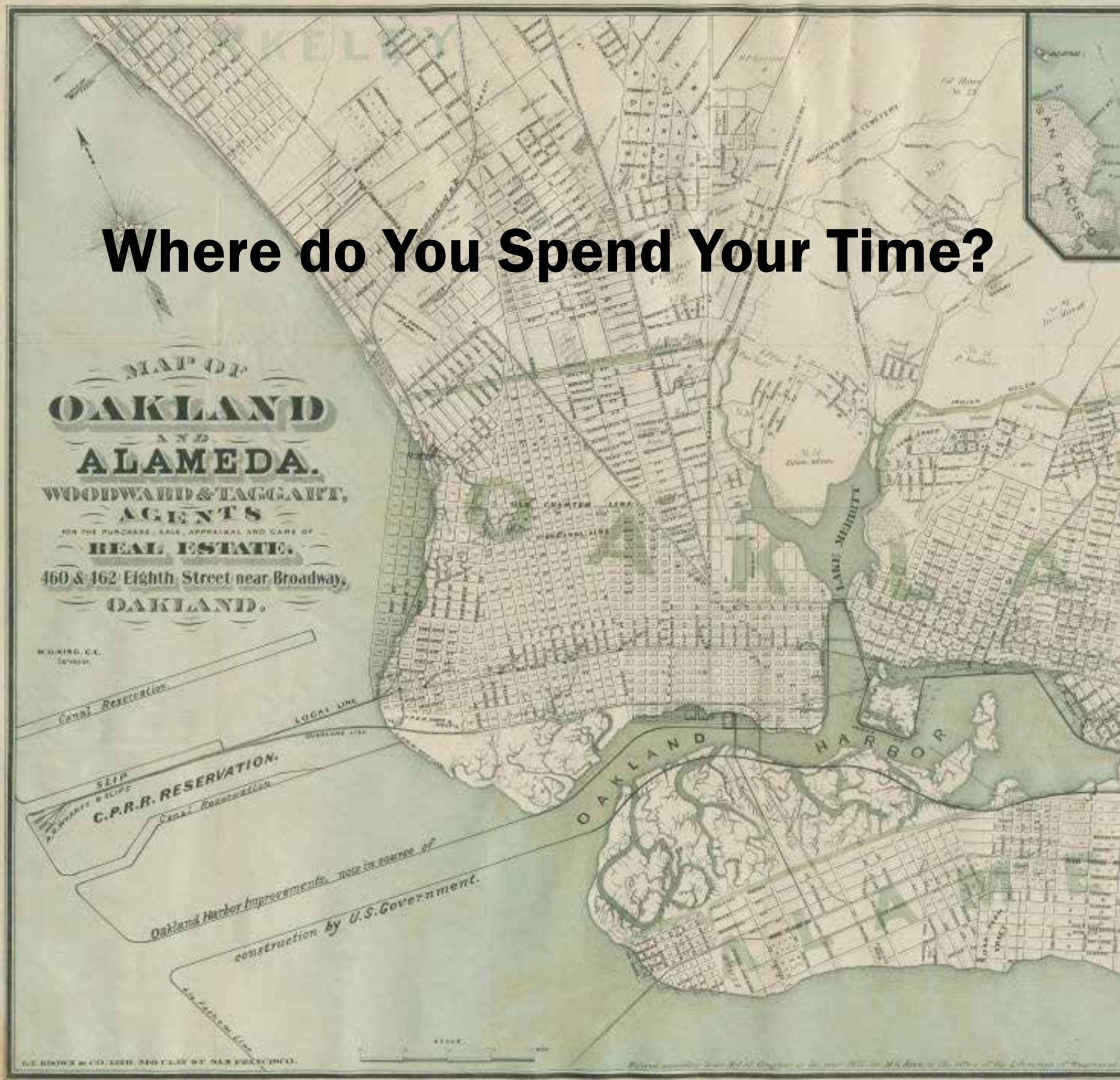
Zooming out, we trace the arterial map of food distribution across the Bay Area—from refrigerated trucks unloading at Safeway distribution centers in Tracy to locally sourced produce at Mandela Grocery Cooperative. The city metabolizes through both: globalized chains ensure volume and consistency; localized alternatives anchor food in community values. One is mass-efficient, the other socially resilient. Rather than opposites, they are complementary lobes of the same lung—inhale and exhale. This image presents the city not as a passive consumer, but as a metabolic body—digesting, distributing, and adapting to the flow of goods, people, and care.


FOOD
LOGISTICS
Arte Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project (anv) - Food Distribution Center
La Finca Tortilleria Inc.
Living Intentions
Earthseed Farm
Luscious Lathers
North Berkeley Farmers' Market
Nomi Tea
Alicia's Tamales Los Mayas
Alvarado Street Bakery
Ancient Organics
The Epicurean Trader
The Epicurean Trader
AVOCURL Natural Handmade Hair Care
Cafe Santana Roasting Company
Primavera
Primavera
Casa Sanchez Foods
Prime Roots
Red Bay Coffee Ferry Building
Socola Chocolatier
Salsas 4 All Seasons LLC.
Cream Co. Meats
Diaspora Co.
Gailani Food Company
Tierango
Haste Muerta Coffee
Hodo
Violia Juice
Way To Life Bakery
Mandela Grocery
Safeway
Whole Foods Market
Safeway
Safeway
Safeway

MAKOTO KOMINE

Spring 2025,
Design Media Seminar: Urban Cultures
Bachelors of Architecture
California College of the Arts, San Francisco
Instructor: Julia Grinkrug

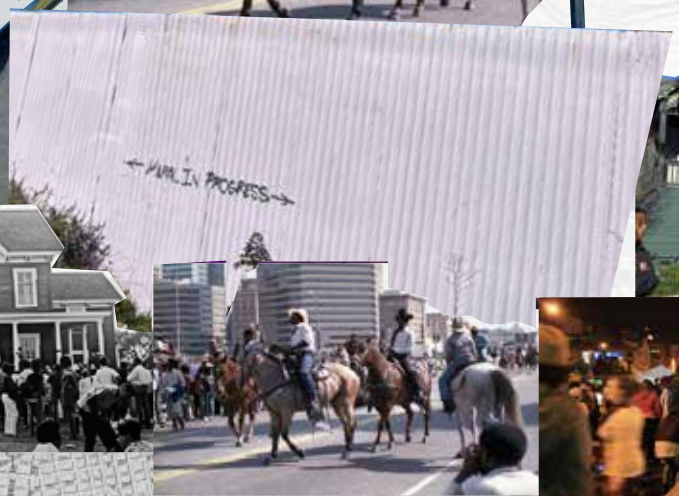
Where do You Spend Your Time?

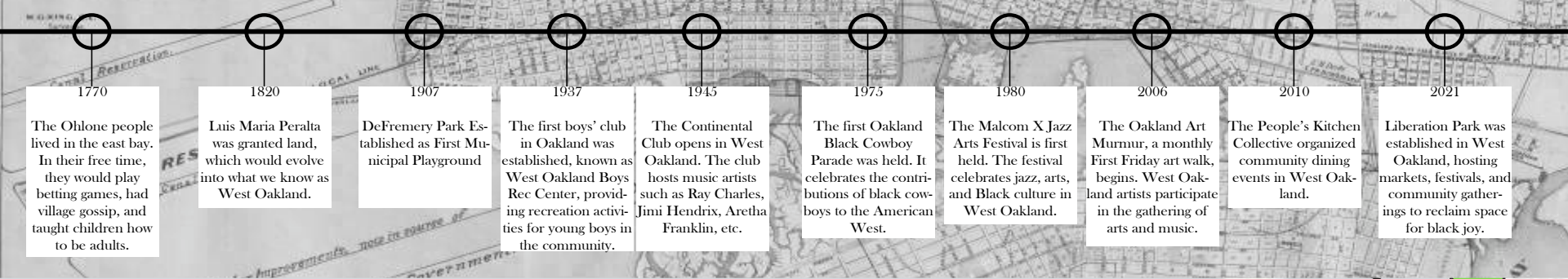


How do you spend your free time in Oakland? Do you check out the neighborhood parks? Attend large events? There is plenty to do here!

In West Oakland, there are a lot of chances to gather as a community and attend large scale events. I have discovered some of the many different types of leisure in the city

Where do you find Leisure?





1770

The Ohlone people lived in the east bay. In their free time, they would play betting games, had village gossip, and taught children how to be adults.

1820

Luis Maria Peralta was granted land, which would evolve into what we know as West Oakland.

1907

DeFremery Park Established as First Municipal Playground

1937

The first boys' club in Oakland was established, known as West Oakland Boys Rec Center, providing recreation activities for young boys in the community.

1945

The Continental Club opens in West Oakland. The club hosts music artists such as Ray Charles, Jimi Hendrix, Aretha Franklin, etc.

1975

The first Oakland Black Cowboy Parade was held. It celebrates the contributions of black cowboys to the American West.

1980

The Malcom X Jazz Arts Festival is first held. The festival celebrates jazz, arts, and Black culture in West Oakland.

2006

The Oakland Art Murmur, a monthly First Friday art walk, begins. West Oakland artists participate in the gathering of arts and music.

2010

The People's Kitchen Collective organized community dining events in West Oakland.

2021

Liberation Park was established in West Oakland, hosting markets, festivals, and community gatherings to reclaim space for black joy.

I want to check out Defremery Park!
Lets head there now!

Even with these large scale leisure events happening in West Oakland,
there are still opportunities of a smaller scale leisure on your way to these events.
Front porch culture is ever present in the Prescott neighborhood. It is common for residents to gather at the front porch or yard of their house to spend their leisure time.
However, some houses do not have these porches as a result of housing code.

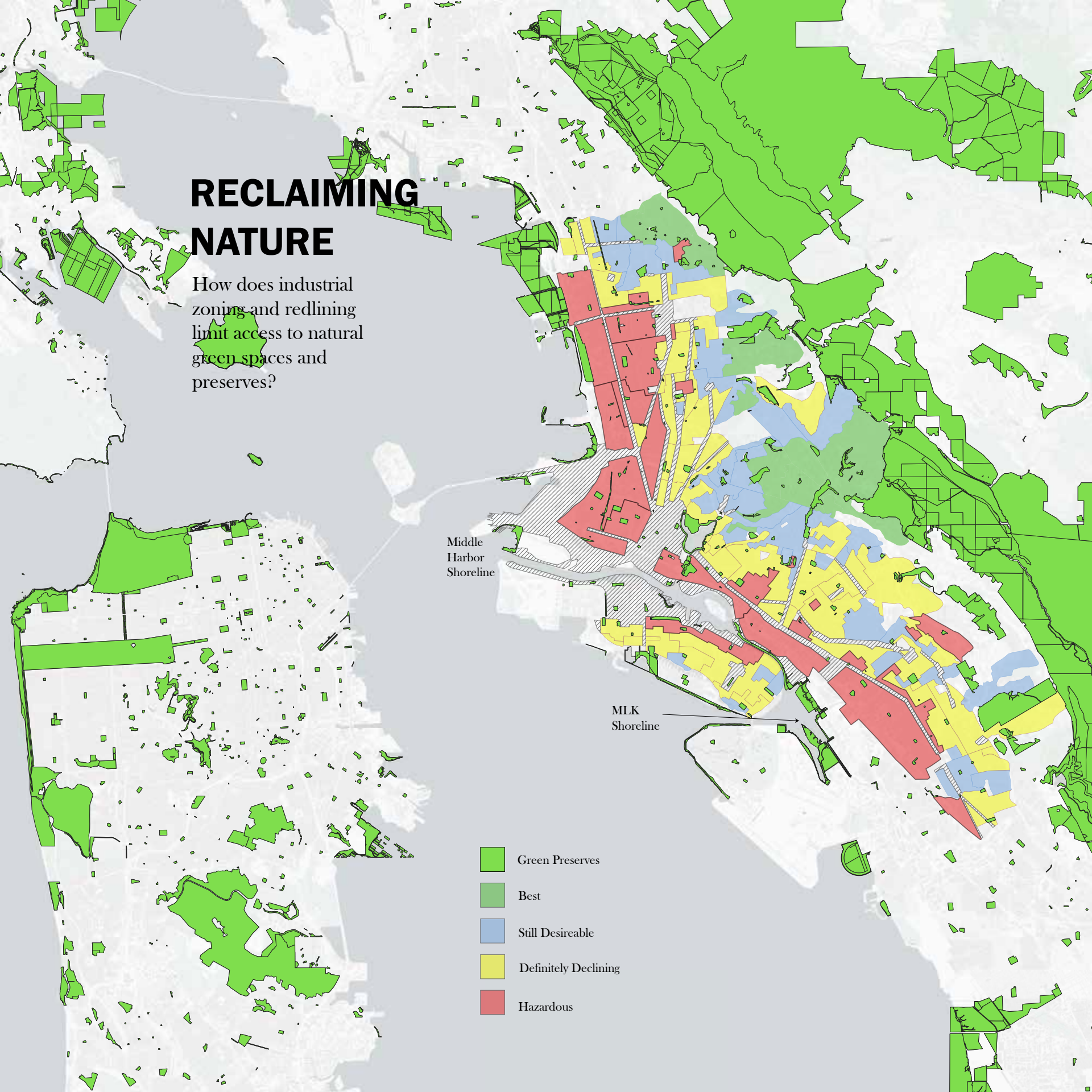
WHERE LEISURE HAPPENS

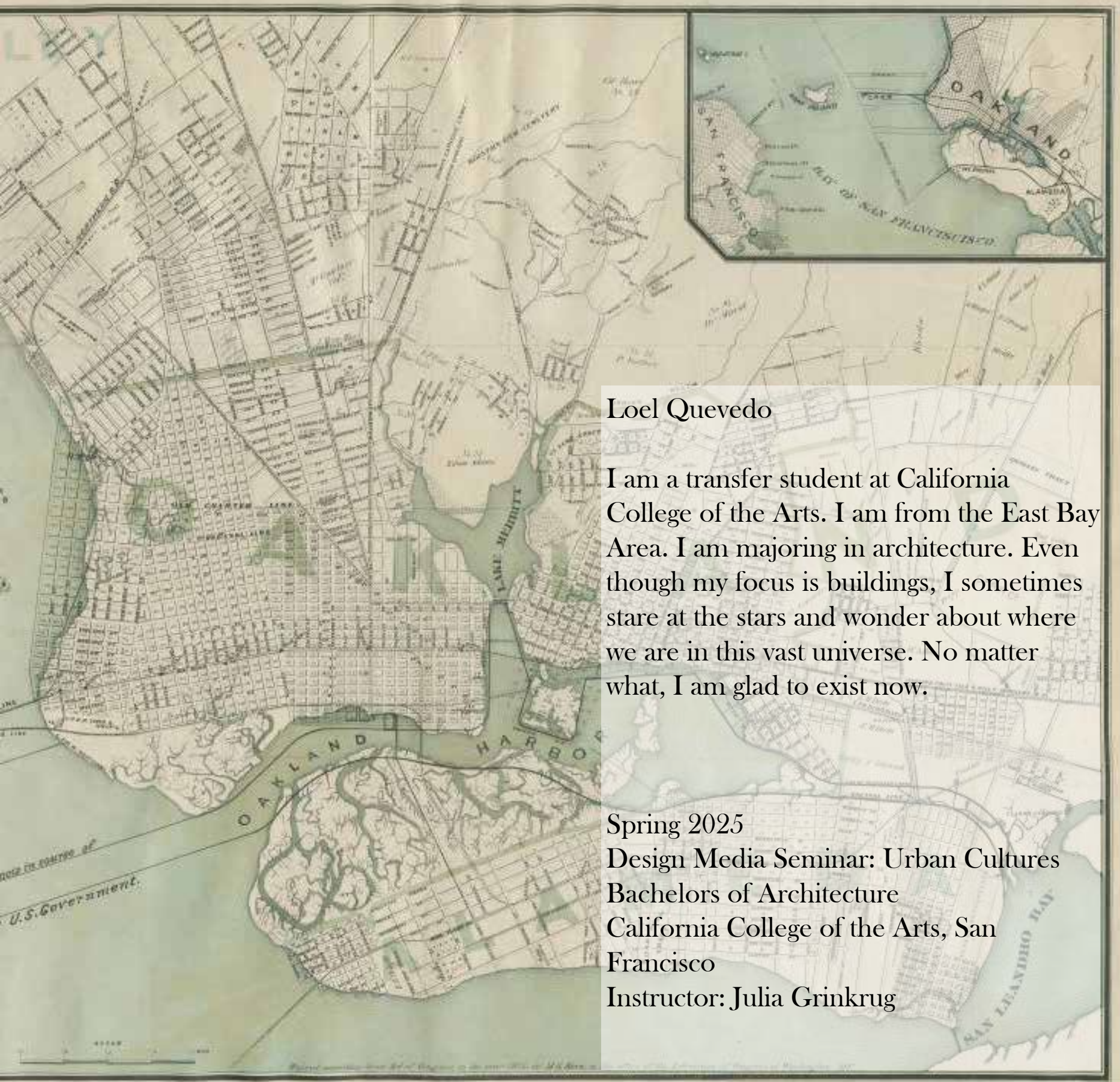
Shall we check out the shoreline?
I want to hang out by the water!
But thats where all the smelly ships are!

Zooming out to get an overview of the entirety of Oakland, we can see the results of decades worth of injustice. Why is that West Oakland is surrounded by industial zones and little green space? Even with the amount of provided parks and green spaces in the area, why are they surrounded by industrial zones?

RECLAIMING NATURE

How does industrial zoning and redlining limit access to natural green spaces and preserves?





Loel Quevedo

I am a transfer student at California College of the Arts. I am from the East Bay Area. I am majoring in architecture. Even though my focus is buildings, I sometimes stare at the stars and wonder about where we are in this vast universe. No matter what, I am glad to exist now.

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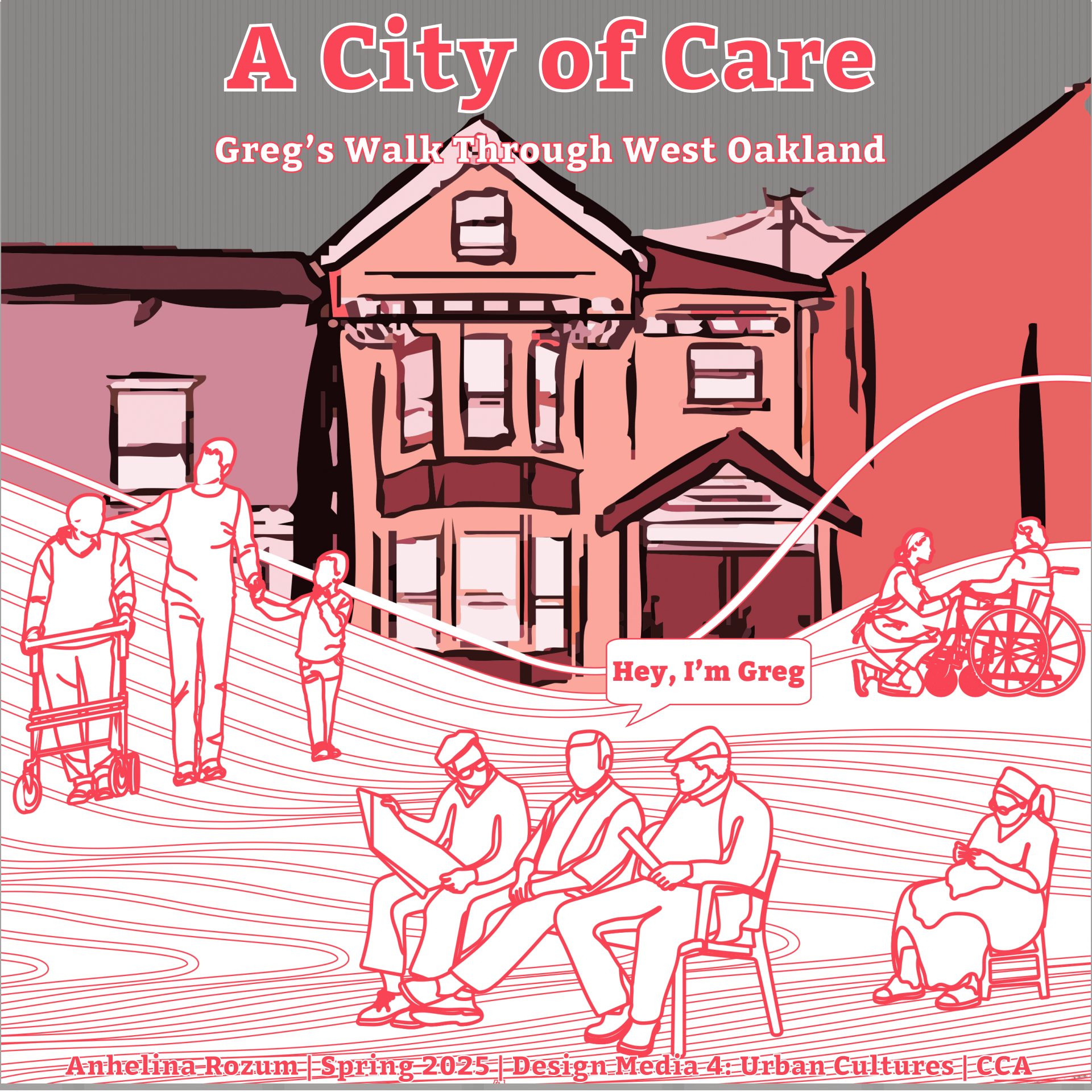
A City of Care

Greg's Walk Through West Oakland



Anhelina Rozum | Spring 2025 | Design Media 4: Urban Cultures | CCA

What is a city of care?

**Is care a matter of infrastructure—or intimacy?
Is it found in city plans, or in the ways we show up for each other?**

**Greg might have the answer.
He's lived in West Oakland his whole life.
He doesn't drive anymore, but every day, he walks.**

This story follows Greg's steps through the past, present, and possible future of care in the Prescott neighborhood.

Elders as the Archive

Pre-Colonial Era (Before Late 18th Century)

- Ohlone Presence: The land was inhabited by Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone peoples, who lived as hunter-gatherers and small-scale agriculturists

Colonial/Mission Era (Late 18th - Early 19th Century)

- Spanish Colonization: Spanish colonialists arrived, displacing the Ohlone people and disrupting their way of life.

Early Industrialization (Mid-Late 19th Century)

- Port and Railroad Development: Oakland was founded as a railway and trading port in 1852 and grew into a commercial and industrial center due to its location between shipping and railroads
- Emergence of a Radial Metropolis: Electric streetcars enabled increased personal mobility, transforming Oakland into a radial metropolis

Streetcar Era (Late 19th - Early 20th Century)

- Expansion Along Streetcar Lines: Development and population growth spread along the streetcar routes, creating new commercial strips and residential areas

Automobile Era (Early-Mid 20th Century)

- Automobile-Oriented Development: The rise of automobiles led to the development of the hills and suburbs, which were largely off-limits to people of color, leaving the flatlands separate and unequal
- Increased Socio-Spatial Segregation: Automobile use enhanced a sense of individual freedom but also intensified socio-spatial segregation and the separation of neighborhoods by race and class

World War II Era (Mid-20th Century)

- Black Migration: Black migrants arrived in large numbers from the South during the military buildup, causing rapid demographic change

Post-War Era (Mid-Late 20th Century)

- White Flight and Suburbanization: White residents moved to suburban areas, while Black residents moved from the West Oakland ghetto in the North and Black Oakland flatlands
- Growth of Black Culture and Politics: By 1960, Oakland had become a center of Black culture and politics but racial inequities persisted
- Urban Renewal and Highway Construction: Represent the impact of urban renewal projects and highway construction on communities, including displacement, and community disruption. These projects often worsened housing disposession
- Disinvestment in the Flatlands: Leading to deterioration

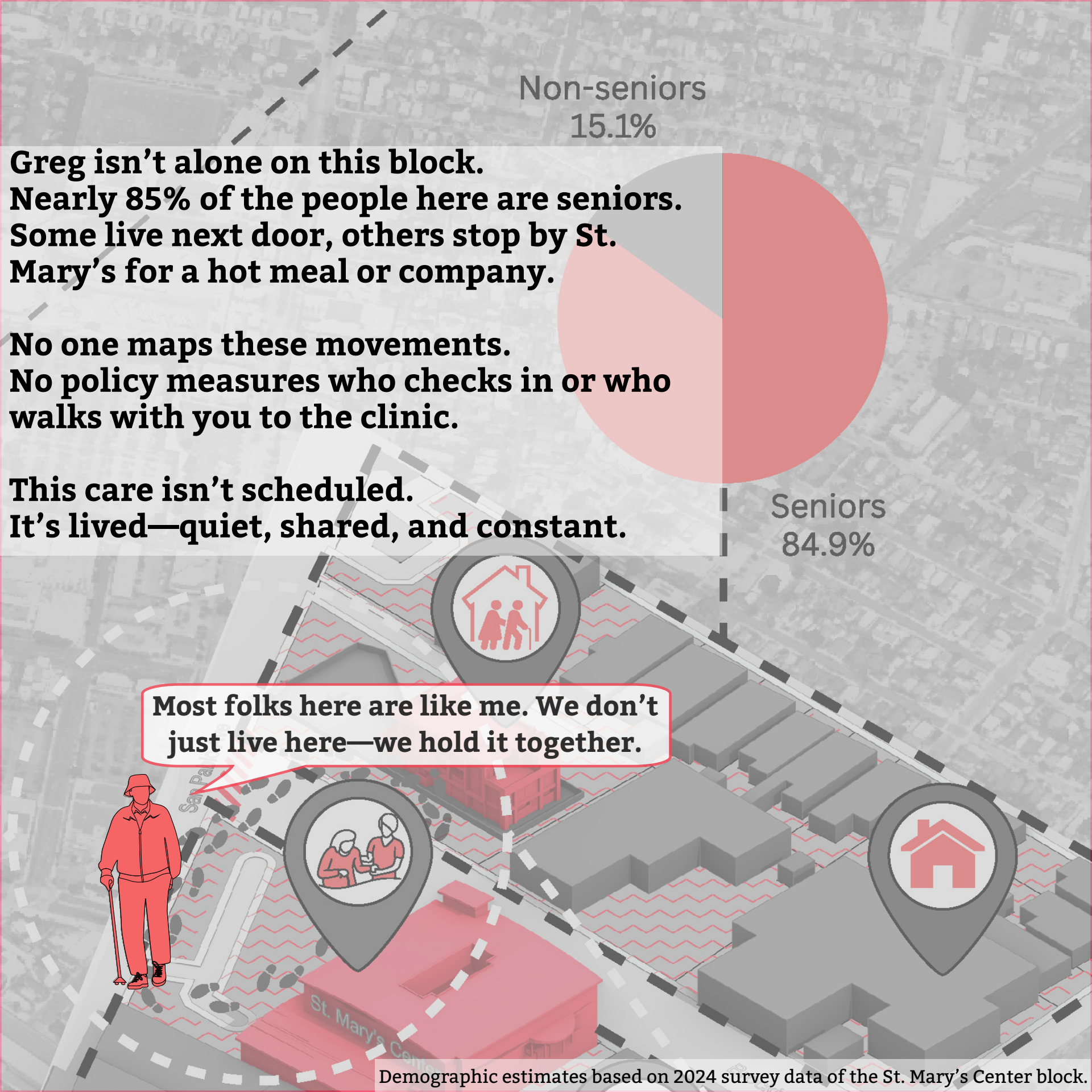
Contemporary Era (Late 20th - 21st Century)

- Immigration and Gentrification: Immigrants from East Asia, Latin America, and East Africa settled across the flatlands, while white migrants (gentrifiers) moved into various parts of the town
- Housing Crisis: Oakland experienced a dire housing shortage amid lopsided privatization of urban development
- Oakland's "Bella Tonka" Identity: Use text, images, or colors to highlight Oakland's unique identity, characterized by its "gritty, down-to-earth vibe" and exceptional convergence of cultures
- Policing: community victim addresses inequities

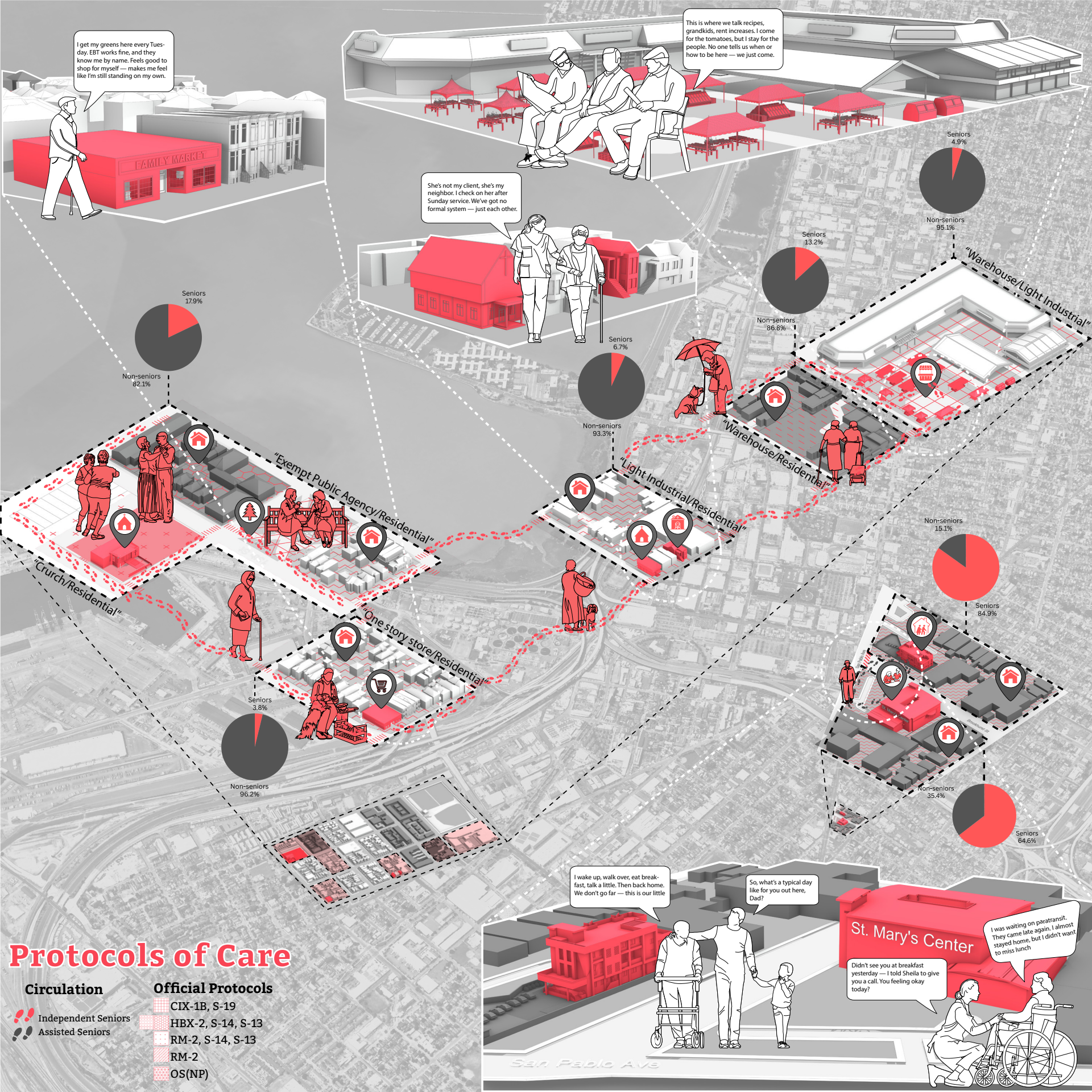
Greg isn’t alone on this block.
Nearly 85% of the people here are seniors.
Some live next door, others stop by St. Mary’s for a hot meal or company.

No one maps these movements.
No policy measures who checks in or who walks with you to the clinic.

This care isn’t scheduled.
It’s lived—quiet, shared, and constant.



Demographic estimates based on 2024 survey data of the St. Mary’s Center block.


I get my greens here every Tuesday. EBT works fine, and they know me by name. Feels good to shop for myself — makes me feel like I'm still standing on my own.
FAMILY MARKET
This is where we talk recipes, grandkids, rent increases. I come for the tomatoes, but I stay for the people. No one tells us when or how to be here — we just come.
She's not my client, she's my neighbor. I check on her after Sunday service. We've got no formal system — just each other.
Seniors 17.9%
Non-seniors 82.1%
"Exempt Public Agency/Residential"
"Crurch/Residential"
Seniors 6.7%
Non-seniors 93.3%
"Light Industrial/Residential"
Seniors 13.2%
Non-seniors 86.8%
"Warehouse/Residential"
Seniors 4.9%
Non-seniors 95.1%
"Warehouse/Light Industrial"
"One story store/Residential"
Seniors 3.8%
Non-seniors 96.2%
Non-seniors 15.1%
Seniors 84.9%
Non-seniors 35.4%
Seniors 64.6%
I wake up, walk over, eat breakfast, talk a little. Then back home. We don't go far — this is our little
So, what's a typical day like for you out here, Dad?
St. Mary's Center
Didn't see you at breakfast yesterday — I told Sheila to give you a call. You feeling okay today?
I was waiting on paratransit. They came late again. I almost stayed home, but I didn't want to miss lunch
San Pablo Ave
Protocols of Care
Circulation
Independent Seniors
Assisted Seniors
Official Protocols
CIX-1B, S-19
HBX-2, S-14, S-13
RM-2, S-14, S-13
RM-2
OS(NP)

One day, the bus ran late.
The sidewalk was closed for construction.
Greg turned back. He missed lunch with a friend.

I used to walk this path daily—never imagined it would vanish under concrete.

This was the moment I realized:
Even a small disruption can break a whole system of care.
When cities over-plan care into fixed programs, they leave no room for people like Greg to choose how to connect.

Sometimes the best care comes from
freedom—freedom to
gather, to wander, to create new rituals.

The freeway split the neighborhood.
It sped up commutes but slowed down connection.
It erased the places where care once happened.

And yet, Greg keeps walking.
His ritual continues—not because the city planned it, but because people still choose to care.

Regional Flows, Local Fractures

I-980 WAS BUILT TO CONNECT DOWNTOWN TO I-580.
IT CUT THROUGH 12 STREETS AND DEMOLISHED OVER 500 BUILDINGS.

New info to include:

Width: ~560 feet (wider than a football field)

It replaced part of Brush Street and disconnected Peralta, Filbert, and Market

Only 2 pedestrian crossings exist over the entire trenchipsum

Lines of Disruption

"Three paths: one collapsed, one built, one resisted."

The freeways do not simply run through Oakland—they mark it. One was dropped from above, crushing blocks and bodies before it was dismantled. Another cuts the edge clean, like a surgical bypass. A third never arrived—halted at the boundary by voices too often ignored. Together, they form a map of intentions: built, buried, and broken.

THE CYPRESS FREEWAY WAS A DOUBLE-DECKER THAT SPLIT WEST OAKLAND IN HALF.
AFTER THE 1989 QUAKE, IT WAS REMOVED AND REBUILT AWAY FROM HOMES.

West Oakland Branch Library

I used to walk this path daily—never imagined it would vanish under concrete.

We fought back—and for once, they listened."
— Marsha, 1982 lawsuit organizer

GROVE SHAFTER FREEWAY WAS STOPPED BEFORE IT COULD SPLIT WEST OAKLAND, RESIDENTS SUED IN 1981 AND WON.

Greg's Broken Ritual

This was not a commute—it was continuity. A social infrastructure built on sidewalks, time, and knowing where to stop and who to wave to.

When I-980 was built, the route collapsed. What had been one continuous circuit became a jagged loop of detours. The walk remained possible—but not without friction, not without loss.

Center for Elders' Independence

Demolished Blocks

"Over 600 homes and 100+ businesses were demolished to make room for I-980."

Entire blocks were cleared to carve a linear cut through West Oakland. Homes, corner stores, Black-owned laundromats, churches, and community centers vanished be-

- ~600 housing units destroyed
- 100+ local businesses closed
- Families moved to East Oakland, Vallejo, and Hayward
- Longtime renters rarely compensated

MAP 1960

Displacement was not temporary—it was total.

Buildings removed (1976–1982)

We never used to come here. Now it's just a quick drive.

Richmond

Regionally Connected

"Highways and BART connected the Bay Area—Richmond to Pacifica, Concord to Daly City—while bypassing the people living just below."

The I-980 trench completed a circuit for the region—faster freight, smoother commutes, more seamless suburban visits. It offered connection across space, but not across streets. What was gained in efficiency was lost in intimacy.

San Francisco

I meet my grandma from West Oakland every week

Daly City

Berkeley

West Oakland

I moved to South City, but I still feel close to the old neighborhood.

Pacifica

South San Francisco

San Bruno

I take 980 to get to school in Oakland—it's the fastest way in.

San Leandro

What kind of city grows when care is left unplanned?

A City of Care

By: Anhelina Rozum

BArch | California College of the Arts | Design Media 4: Urban Cultures | Instructor: Yulia Grinkrug

Chapters of Care:

Project 1 – "Elders as the Archive"

A timeline of West Oakland's history as told through its senior residents.
Greg walks a path layered with memory—past protests, homes lost to development, and stories too often left out of maps.

Project 2 – "Protocols of Care"

Unwritten systems of support, adaptation, and resilience among West Oakland's aging residents.
Greg doesn't live in assisted housing, but he's never far from care.

Project 3 – "Regional Flows, Local Fractures"

A study of how I-980 and other infrastructures fractured West Oakland's pathways of care.
What Greg once walked daily became a loop of detours and silence. But residents like him refused to disappear.

"Care doesn't always come with signage. Sometimes, it's just knowing which bench stays shaded, and who sits there at noon."

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY 1868

CCA ARCHITECTURE